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Mood Alternations in Old High German Subordinate Clauses

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Abstract In this paper, Old High German mood alternations in the different types of subordinate clauses (complement, adverbial and relative clauses) are discussed. The use of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses is notoriously more frequent than in Modern German and has not yet been thoroughly investigated. Based on a comprehensive corpus study, the paper will show that the licensing conditions for the subjunctive in Old High German are determined by notions such as veridicality and – in relative contexts – specificity. These conditions are thus similar (but not always identical) to those observed for Modern Greek and Romance languages. Furthermore, a syntactic analysis is provided in order to account for the licensing of the subjunctive in each type of subordinate clause.

Keywords Old High German. Mood alternation. Subordinate clause. Complement clause. Adverbial clause. Relative clause. Subjunctive. Indicative. Corpus study. Veridicality. Specificity.

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1 Introduction

As illustrated in (1), Modern German (henceforth MG) has almost completely lost the use of the subjunctive in favour of the indicative in subordinate clauses (apart from indirect speech and other special contexts, cf. Thieroff 2010):[1]

(1) Anna möchte, dass sie ihr einen Pinguin **kaufen** / ***kauften**.
Anna would.like that they her a penguin buy.IND / buy.SUBJ
‘Anna wants them to buy her a penguin.’

In contrast, Old High German (OHG)[2] subordinate clauses could exhibit the subjunctive (cf. Schrodt 1983, 133 ff.):[3]

(2) bát hér inan thaz her íz
asked he him.ACC that he it.ACC
fon erdu / **arleitti** (T 19, 5)
from shore.DAT pushed.SUBJ.3SG
‘He asked him to push it [the boat] away from the shore’

(3) Er wolta in álawari, thaz ér ouh sín **wari** (O II, 4, 15)
He wanted in truth that he also his was.SUBJ.3SG
‘Indeed, he [the devil] wanted him [Jesus in the desert] to be his own [servant]’

We would like to thank the audience of the 19th *DiGS Conference* (Stellenbosch, 5-8 September 2017) and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on this paper.

1 Both MG and OHG display two forms of the subjunctive, depending on the stem form of the inflected verb, namely the so-called subjunctive I, which is derived from the present stem of the inflected verb, as in MG *er gebe* (he give.SUBJ.I.3SG), and the subjunctive II, which is derived from the preterit stem, as in MG *er gäbe* (he give.SUBJ.II.3SG). While these two forms display relevant semantic differences in main clauses, they are often interchangeable in subordinate ones, including reportative uses (see Fabricius-Hansen, Sæbø 2004). As the present paper deals with subordinate clauses only, the distinction between subjunctive I and II both in the analysis and in the glosses will be ignored.

2 In the absence of different indications, the OHG examples are taken from the *Referenzkorpus Altdeutsch* (see § 4).

3 Note that, while one could argue that the reason for the choice of the subjunctive in (3) is the rhyme with *álawari*, it will be shown in § 4.1 below that *wellen* (want) requires the subjunctive in its finite complements across the board in OHG.

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From the observation of the data above, two obvious questions arise:

1. How can we explain the contrast between the OHG and the MG data?
2. What are the factors licensing the subjunctive in OHG subordinate clauses?

In this paper, we will first discuss mood alternations in subordinate clauses from a cross-linguistic perspective (§ 2). We will then consider mood alternations in OHG and we will present some hypotheses on the licensing of the subjunctive in this language stage (§ 3). In § 4, we will conduct a corpus-based investigation into the licensing of subjunctive mood in different types of subordinate clauses. A syntactic analysis and proposal for the licensing of mood is presented in § 5.

2 Mood Alternations in Subordinate Clauses Cross-Linguistically

In recent years, mood alternations – especially the licensing of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses – have received attention in different languages, especially in Modern Greek and Romance languages, but also in many other languages (cf. Farkas 1985, 1992; Ledgeway 2012; Quer 2001; Giannakidou 2009; Roussou 2009; Rothstein, Thieroff 2010; Lühr 2013; etc.). In this section, we will sum up the main results of the discussion on the cross-linguistic properties of mood alternations in complement, adverbial and relative clauses, respectively.

2.1 Mood Alternations in Complement Clauses

Let us start with complement clauses. Contrasts like (4)-(5) for Catalan have been interpreted in several ways. The availability of the indicative or subjunctive has been considered as a reflex of (non-)veridical properties of the embedding predicates, or of the *realis* vs *irrealis* interpretation of a certain event, and so on.

(4) L’ Anna pensa que els pingüins
the Anna think.3SG that the penguins
volen / ***volin** (Quer 2001, 83)
fly.IND.3PL / fly.SUBJ.3PL
‘Anna thinks that penguins fly’

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(5) L’ Anna vol que li **comprin** / ***compren**
the Anna want.3SG that her buy.SUBJ.3PL / buy.IND.3PL
un pingüí (Quer 2001, 83)
a penguin
‘Anna wants them to buy her a penguin’

With respect to Modern Greek, Giannakidou (2009) distinguishes between indicative or veridical verbs (6), for which “at least one epistemic agent (the speaker or the subject of the main verb) is committed to the truth of the complement sentence” (Giannakidou 2009, 1887) and subjunctive or non-veridical predicates (7), for which there is no such commitment (with language-specific exceptions, cf. Giorgi, Pianesi 1997).

(6) *Indicative or veridical verbs* (adapted from Giannakidou 2009, 1887 ff.)
a. assertives (Greek equivalents of the verbs *say*, *read*, *claim*)
b. fiction verbs (*dream*, *imagine*)
c. epistemics (*believe*, *think*)
d. factive verbs (*be glad*, *know*, *regret*)
e. semifactives (*discover*, *remember*)

(7) *Subjunctive or non-veridical predicates* (adapted from Giannakidou 2009, 1887 ff.)
a. volitionals (*want*, *hope*, *plan*)
b. directives (*order*, *advise*, *suggest*)
c. modals (*must*, *may*)
d. permissives (*allow*, *forbid*)
e. negative (*avoid*, *refuse*)

Giannakidou (2009, 2013) can thus capture Modern Greek contrasts like (8)-(9) based on the classification above. In Greek, two different complementizers – *oti* and *na* – are used to introduce indicative and subjunctive complement clauses, respectively, as in the examples below (adapted from Giannakidou 2013, 23):[4]

(8) O Pavlos nomizi **oti** / ***na** efije i Roxani.
the Paul think.3SG that.IND / that.SUBJ left.3SG the Roxani
‘Paul thinks that Roxanne left.’

(9) Thelo ***oti** / **na** erthi o Pavlos.
want.1sg that.IND that.SUBJ come.PNP.3SG the Paul
‘I want Paul to come.’

4 In addition, the verb in the subjunctive clause displays the special morphological form of the perfective non-past, glossed PNP.

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Analogous alternations have also been reported for a number of other languages, such as Romance languages (Poletto 1995, 2000; Damonte 2010; Ledgeway 2012; Mensching 2012), Cimbrian (Bidese p.c.; Padovan 2011), etc. (also cf. Rothstein, Thieroff 2010).

2.2 Mood Alternations in Adverbial Clauses

Mood alternations in adverbial clauses are investigated, among others, by Giannakidou (1994, 1998, 2009), Giannakidou, Zwarts (1999) and Quer (2001). They show that the following types of adverbial clauses license the subjunctive in Modern Greek and Catalan/Spanish: purpose clauses (10)-(11), concessive conditionals (12), temporal *before*-clauses (13), *without*-clauses (14):[5]

(10) I Ariadne irthe
the Ariadne came
ja **na** mas voithisi. (adapted from Giannakidou 2009, 1892)
for SUBJ us helps.PNP
'Ariadne came (in order to) help us.'

(11) L'ha convidada **perquè**
her-has invited so.that
no **s'enfadi** (adapted from Quer 2001, 89)
not herself-gets.angry.SUBJ
'S/he has invited her so that she will not get angry.'

(12) **Encara que** no **sigui** major d'edat, [...] (adapted from Quer 2001, 93)
although not is.SUBJ major of-age
'Even if he is not of age, [...].'

(13) I Ariadne efije
the Ariadne left
prin na erthi o Janis. (adapted from Giannakidou 2009, 1892)
before SUBJ came.PNP the John
'Ariadne left before John arrived.'

5 Note, however, that factive emotive verbs like *complain*, *be glad*, *wonder* etc. are special within the veridical group (see the discussion in Giannakidou 2012, §§ 3.1 and 4). Quer (2001) shows that clauses embedded under such predicates display optionality between the indicative and the subjunctive across different Romance varieties, while in Greek, the complementizer can vary between the canonical assertive *oti* and *pu* (Giannakidou 2012, §§ 1 and 3).

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(14) I Ariadne milise **xoris** na
the Ariadne talked without SUBJ
xrisimopiisi mikrofono (adapted from Giannakidou 2009, 1892)
uses.PNP microphone
'Ariadne talked without using a microphone.'

Discussing data from Greek, Giannakidou (1998, § 3.3) argues that these contexts are non-veridical in terms of entailment, i.e., the proposition expressed by the adverbial clause of the respective type is not entailed by the matrix event, although it is set completely in the past. E.g., in (13), Ariadne's departure does not entail the event that John came, just as *p before q* does not entail *q*. Similarly, in (14), *without a microphone* entails *not using a microphone*. This is different in the case of temporal *when*-clauses, which are entailed by the respective matrix clause, i.e., *p after q* entails *q*. In Modern Greek, such clauses do not display the subjunctive complementizer *na* (Giannakidou 2012, § 3.1).

2.3 Mood Alternations in Relative Clauses

Mood alternations are also attested in relative clauses, for instance in the Romance languages (cf. Cinque 1988; Farkas 1992; Quer 1998; Zwart 2005). According to Quer (2001), the subjunctive is typically licensed in restrictive relative clauses (and in free relatives in generic contexts).

Giannakidou (1998) argues that in Greek, the indicative correlates with the existence of a referent described by the antecedent of the relative clause, while the subjunctive leaves it open whether such a referent is present. This property shows up in relative clauses modifying an indefinite antecedent in negative contexts. The basic difference between the relative clauses in (15) and (16) is that in the indicative one, the indefinite takes scope over the negative operator, which results in an interpretation according to which there is an individual with the respective properties present in the context. By contrast, in (16) it is not assumed that such an individual exists:

(15) Dhen idha enan andra pu forai kokino kapelo (Giannakidou 2009, 1888)
not saw a man that wear red hat
'I didn't see a certain man wearing a red hat'

(16) Dhen idha enan andra
not saw a man
pu **na** forai kokino kapelo (Giannakidou 2009, 1888)

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that SUBJ wear red hat
'I did not see any man wearing a red hat'

Thus, in relative clauses, veridicality is a property of the referent and not of the matrix verb (von Heusinger 2002; also cf. Coniglio 2017). Accordingly, Giannakidou (2013, 34) describes Greek mood alternations as follows:

> the function of the subjunctive in the relative clause is to bring in the speaker's subjective point of view, in particular, her uncertainty about the existence of a value for the NP. I will call this epistemic weakening of the subjunctive.

This is equivalent to the interpretation for mood alternations provided by Catasso and Hinterhölzl (2016) for Standard Italian. Based on the minimal pair in (17a-b), they interpret the alternations based on the *de re* / *de dicto* interpretation of the referent of the relative clause:

(17) a. Gianni cerca una donna che **ha** gli occhi blu. *de re*
Gianni looks.for a woman that has.IND the eyes blue
b. Gianni cerca una donna che **abbia** gli occhi blu. *de dicto*
Gianni looks.for a woman that has.SUBJ the eyes blue
'Gianni is looking for a woman that has blue eyes'
(Catasso, Hinterhölzl 2016, 109)

Thus, if the referent receives a *de re* interpretation (which means that it is specific), then the indicative is used (17a). In contrast, the subjunctive is used if the referent receives a *de dicto* interpretation (non-specific) (17b). This is true at least for Standard Italian, since in Colloquial Italian, the indicative is also available in non-specific contexts.

Catasso and Hinterhölzl (2016) describe a striking analogy between mood in Italian relative clauses and verb position in MG relative clauses. It is a well-known fact that, apart from special contexts (such as reported speech and counterfactual contexts), the subjunctive is ruled out from relative clauses in MG. But still the *de re*/*de dicto* interpretation of the referent may play a role with respect to verb placement. As illustrated by the following examples, besides V-final relative clauses (18a), which allow for both the *de re* and the *de dicto* interpretation, MG also exhibit V2 relative clauses (18b), which only allow for the *de re* interpretation (cf. Gärtner 2001, 138; 2002, 35; Ebert, Endriss, Gärtner 2007; Catasso, Hinterhölzl 2016; etc.):

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(18)	a.	Hans	sucht	eine	Frau,	die	blaue	Augen	**hat**.		*de re* / *de dicto*
		Hans	looks.for	a	woman	who	blue	eyes	has		
	b.	Hans	sucht	eine	Frau,	die	**hat**	blaue	Augen.		*de re* / **de dicto*
		Hans	looks.for	a	woman	who	has	blue	eyes		

‘Hans is looking for a woman that has blue eyes.’

(Catasso, Hinterhölzl 2016, 109)

Notice that V2 relative clauses – on a par with restrictive V-final relative clauses – exhibit a continuation rise tone (cf. Gärtner 2001), as shown in (19a-b):

(19)	a.	Das	Blatt	hat	eine	Seite,	(/)	[	die	**ist**	ganz	schwarz].
		the	sheet	has	a	side			that	is	completely	black
	b.	Das	Blatt	hat	eine	Seite,	(/)	[	die	ganz	schwarz	**ist**].
		the	sheet	has	a	side			that	completely	black	is

‘The sheet has one side that is completely black’

(based on Gärtner 2001, 112)

However, in contrast to V-final relative clauses, V2 relative clauses must be obligatorily extraposed (20a), and they cannot be part of the middle field of the matrix clause (20b). This restriction does not hold for V-final relative clauses, as (20c) suggests (Gärtner 1998, 2001; Endriss, Gärtner 2005; Ebert, Endriss, Gärtner 2007):

(20) a. [$_{CP1}$ Die Apfeldorfer haben viele Häuser gebaut][$_{CP2}$ die **stehen** heute leer]
the inhabitants.of.Apfeldorf have lots.of houses built that stay today empty
b. *[$_{CP1}$ Die Apfeldorfer haben viele Häuser, [$_{CP2}$ die **stehen** heute leer], gebaut]
the inhabitants.of.Apfeldorf have lots.of houses that stay today empty built
c. [$_{CP1}$ Die Apfeldorfer haben viele Häuser, [$_{CP2}$ die heute leer **stehen**], gebaut]
the inhabitants.of.Apfeldorf have lots.of houses that today empty stay built
‘The inhabitants of Apfeldorf have built lots of houses that are empty today.’

Finally, the antecedent of a V2 relative clause must be expressed by way of an indefinite description (21a). Negative indefinites (21b) and quantified expressions (21c) cannot serve as antecedents of V2 relative clauses. This is to say that only specific (or wide-scope) indefinites that introduce individuals as discourse referents may be antecedents of V2 relative clauses (Gärtner 1998; 2001, 138; 2002, 35; Ebert, Endriss, Gärtner 2007):

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(21) a. Ich kenne **eine Frau**, die besitzt ein Pferd.
b. *Ich kenne **keine Frau**, die besitzt ein Pferd.
c. *Ich kenne **jede Frau**, die besitzt ein Pferd.
‘I know a/*no/*each woman who owns a horse’
(Endriss, Gärtner 2005, 198)

In general, V2 relative clauses behave semantically as if they were subordinate structures, while they exhibit a certain degree of syntactic independence (Gärtner 1998, 2001; Endriss, Gärtner 2005).

3 Old High German Mood Alternations. Questions and Hypotheses

The distribution of the indicative and the subjunctive in subordinate clauses in OHG is a much debated issue, both in the traditional philological literature as well as in some more recent studies. Traditional grammarians have tried to capture this distribution along the lines of the classical *realis/irrealis* opposition, arguing that the indicative is used to signal the commitment of the speaker to the truth of the embedded proposition while the subjunctive is selected to express doubt or uncertainty towards the validity of the event in the complement clause (see the summary in Schrodt 1983). This explanation is unsatisfactory because it fails to account for a series of cases in which the subjunctive refers to ‘real’ events. For instance, as Guchman and Semenjuk (1981, 129) observe, the traditional explanation is untenable given that in an example like in (22), the subjunctive is attested in a complement clause which refers to the basic premise of Christian belief, i.e. the validity of the Holy Trinity:

(22) Araugit ist in dhes aldin uuizssodes boohhum
revealed is in the.GEN.SG old wisdom.GEN.SG book.DAT.PL
dhazs fater endi sunu endi heilac gheist got **sii**. (I IV, 1)
that father and son end holy ghost God is.SUBJ
‘It is revealed in the books of the Old Testament that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are God himself’

Schrodt (1983) presents an alternative account trying to explain the distribution of the indicative and the subjunctive in OHG on more abstract, theoretic grounds. He claims that mood choice correlates with the truth value of the proposition, which in turn depends on the semantic type of the governing predicate and the presence or absence of negation and modality in the upper clause. In general, he claims that predicates whose comple-

ments are of a definite truth value (true or false) select the indicative while the subjunctive correlates with an unspecified truth value. Schrodt (1983) considers as prototypical representatives of the former class of predicates implicative verbs like *irfullen* (implement) and factive verbs like *wizzan* (know), while the latter class is represented by a group of verbs called non-factive, including verbs of saying and thinking but also volitional and directive predicates (see also Schrodt 2004, 184 ff.).

But this classification of matrix predicates is problematic, as is also observed in Petrova (2013, 46). It is well known that verbs like *say* and *believe* on the one hand, and *want*, *ask* and *demand* on the other hand display a different clause-embedding behaviour across languages (Farkas 1992; Giannakidou 1997, 1998 and subsequent work). Petrova (2013, 46) observes that there is a difference in the selecting properties of these predicates in OHG, in that verbs of saying and thinking allow both the indicative and the subjunctive in their complements, see (23) and (24), while directive verbs strictly select the subjunctive, as in (25) (see also (2) and (3) above):

(23)	Áfur	zalta	in	drúhtin	tház,	
	again	told	them	Lord	that	
	thaz	er	**ist**	líoht	irwélitaz	(O III, 17, 67)
	that	he	is.IND	light	chosen	

'Jesus told them again that he was the chosen light'

(24)	zált	in	in	giwíssi,	thaz	ér	
	told	them	in	sure	that	he	
	then	man	ni	**wéssi**			(O IV, 18, 30)
	the.ACC	man	NEG	know.SUBJ.PRES.3SG			

'He told them for sure that he did not know the man'

(25)	**gibót**	thaz	sie	**fuorin**	/	
	ordered	that	they	travel.SUBJ		
	ubar	then	giozon			(T 85, 20 ff., cited in Petrova 2013, 45)
	over	the	lake			

Lat. 'iussit ire / trans fr&um'
'he ordered them to cross the lake'

These alternations are explainable if we apply Giannakidou's (2009) notion of (non-)veridicality to the data. The variation between the indicative and the subjunctive in the complements of verbs of saying and thinking – as in (23) and (24) – is not surprising given that these verbs embed indirect reports, in which context both the indicative and the subjunctive are possible from the beginning of the attestation to present days (see Petrova 2008 for OHG

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and Fabricius-Hansen, Sæbø 2004 for MG). In addition, as will be outlined in § 4.1, complements of veridical verbs display the subjunctive if the matrix predicate is in the scope of a negative, modal or interrogative operator. This is in a sense parallel to relative clauses, in which, for example, an indefinite antecedent in the scope of negation also requires the subjunctive. But in complements of non-veridical verbs, as in (25), only the subjunctive is present. We suggest, in line with Petrova (2013), that the subjunctive in such cases is triggered by the non-veridical matrix verb, e.g. *gibót* (ordered) in (25). However, in general, no investigations have so far been conducted based on the entire corpus of OHG texts, nor did any previous systematic survey focus on mood alternations in OHG relative and adverbial clauses.

As to mood alternations in OHG adverbial clauses, Schrodt (2004, 191 ff.) observes the typical realization of the subjunctive in contexts that are reminiscent of those described by Giannakidou (2009) and Quer (2001) for Greek and some Romance languages. According to Schrodt (2004, 191 ff.), the subjunctive is very frequently (in some cases obligatorily) used in the following contexts (see also Erdmann 1874; Förster 1895; Valentin 1979, 1990, 1997; Schrodt 1983, 2004):

1. 'Posterior' temporal clauses

(26) [...] **er** daz so **ergange**. (NB 80.12, cited in Schrodt 2004, 193)
before that so happens.SUBJ
'[...] before that happens'

2. Concessive clauses (which are claimed to be always used with the subjunctive by Otfrid and Notker, Schrodt 2004, 193)

(27) [...] **thoh** er tho kind **wari** (O II, 3, 31, cited in Schrodt 2004, 159)
even though he there child was.SUBJ
'[...] even though he was a child at that time'

3. Purpose clauses (always with the subjunctive, Schrodt 2004, 193)

(28) [...] **thaz** er sia zi imo **nami** (O IV, 32, 9, cited in Schrodt 2004, 161)
that he her to him took.SUBJ
'[...] (so) that he took her with him'

4. Comparative clauses

(29) [...] baz in thereru noti
better in this distress
thanne ther kuning **dati** (O III, 11, 4, cited in Schrodt 2004, 194)

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than the king did.SUBJ
'[...] in this distress better than the king could do'

5. Conditional clauses

(30) **oba** ih thero buacho guati
if I these.GEN books.GEN goodness
hiar iawiht **missikerti**, [...] (O H.1, cited in Schrodt 2004, 157)
here anything distorted.SUBJ
'If I distorted anything of the goodness of these books [...]'

6. 'Exceptive' clauses (always with the subjunctive, Schrodt 2004, 195)

(31) [...] mit gót er iz ni **wirke**! (O II, 12, 10, cited in Schrodt 2004, 195)
with God he it not works.SUBJ
'[...] unless he does it with God's help'

Finally, with respect to OHG relative clauses, already the traditional grammarians observe that the negation of the antecedent plays a role in the licensing of the subjunctive (cf. Abraham, Nishiwaki forthcoming). For instance, Erdmann (1874, 135) argues that the indicative in OHG is used in relative clauses modifying an antecedent of affirmative clauses (32), while the subjunctive is categorical in relative clauses whose antecedent is negated (33). Thus, the use of the subjunctive in attributive relative clauses in OHG seems to depend on the existence of the referent in the actual world that is expressed by the antecedent.

(32) senu mín kneht then ih **gicós** (T 69, 9)
look my child whom I chose.IND.1SG
'look, my child, whom I chose'

(33) nioman nist in thinemo cunne
noone NEG-is in your kinship
thie thar ginemnit **sî** thesemo namen. (T 4, 11)
who PRT called is.SUBJ this.DAT name.DAT
'Nobody in your kinship has been given this name'

However, Schrodt (2004, 195 ff.) points out that mood alternations in these types of subordinate clauses should be investigated in a more systematic way. In a recent investigation, Coniglio (2017) shows that in OHG relative clauses, mood correlates with the (non-)specificity of the referent of the antecedent (note that the existence of a referent is a necessary condition ena-

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bling the specific interpretation of a noun phrase, see von Heusinger 2011). This is reminiscent of the situation described for the Romance languages.[6]

Following this state of the art, we will pursue an explanation of the following questions:

a. What are the factors determining mood alternations in OHG? Are these the same as described for Greek (Giannakidou 2009) or for Romance languages (Quer 1998)?
b. Is there one overarching factor responsible for the licensing of the subjunctive (for example, 'overt marking of information about model interpretation', Quer 2001, 109)? Alternatively, do we have to resort to different explanations for each type of subordinate clause?
c. How can mood distribution in OHG be modelled morpho-syntactically?
d. What can be said about the diachronic change that led to the situation in MG? Which morpho-syntactic and semantic features or properties responsible for the licensing of the subjunctive were ultimately lost in later stages of the language?

4 Corpus Investigation and Discussion

For the present goals, mood distribution (in particular, the licensing of the subjunctive) in OHG subordinate clauses is investigated based on the Old German Reference Corpus (DDD-*Referenzkorpus Altdeutsch*, henceforth ReA): Donhauser, Karin; Gippert, Jost; Lühr, Rosemarie; ddd-ad (Version 1.0), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin `http://hdl.handle.net/11022/0000-0003-37E5-D` (searchable via ANNIS, Krause, Zeldes 2016, `http://corpus-tools.org/annis/`).

In this corpus, clause types and mood are annotated on dedicated tiers. All types of main and subordinate clauses (n=28,387) were retrieved under the exclusion of non-OHG examples (Latin and Old Saxon). Additionally, the corpus involves tagging of inflectional morphology, including verbal mood. Using this annotation, we retrieved all subordinate clauses includ-

6 Furthermore, a well investigated fact is the diachronic link between MG V2 relative clauses and historical ones (Axel-Tober 2012), such as the following example:

(i)	Ein	ander	tier	ist,	daz	**heizzent**	die	Chrieche	Hinam.	(WPh VI, 1, cited in Axel-Tober 2012, 246)
	an	other	animal	is	that	call.IND	the	Greeks	hyena	

'There is another animal which the Greeks call hyena'

Now, given that the antecedents in these constructions are obligatorily specific indefinites, and given that specificity is also related to mood alternations in OHG, one could wonder whether mood alternations and verb position are the reflex of one and the same phenomenon (cf. Coniglio 2017).

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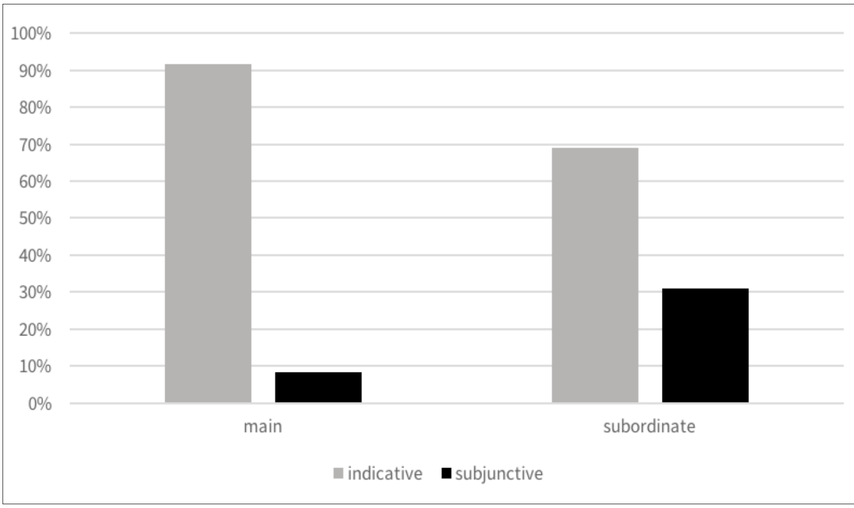


Figure 1. Mood in main and subordinate clauses

ing a finite verb in the indicative or in the subjunctive. The results of this first general query yielded the results presented in table 1 and represented in fig. 1.

	main		subordinate	
indicative	15,902	92%	7,600	69%
subjunctive	1,475	8%	3,410	31%

Table 1. Mood in main and subordinate clauses

The traditional observation that the subjunctive is used more often in subordinate clauses than in main clauses is thus borne out by the distribution in ReA.

The inspection of indicative/subjunctive alternations *vis-à-vis* the different types of subordinate clauses reveals that only 11.2% of (attributive) relative clauses exhibit the subjunctive, in clear contrast to complement and adverbial clauses with 43.9% and 34.4%, respectively (cf. table 2 and fig. 2).[7]

7 The low number for the subjunctive in relative clauses (n=332) has probably to do with its particular licensing conditions: only weak determiners that are not in the scope of a nega-

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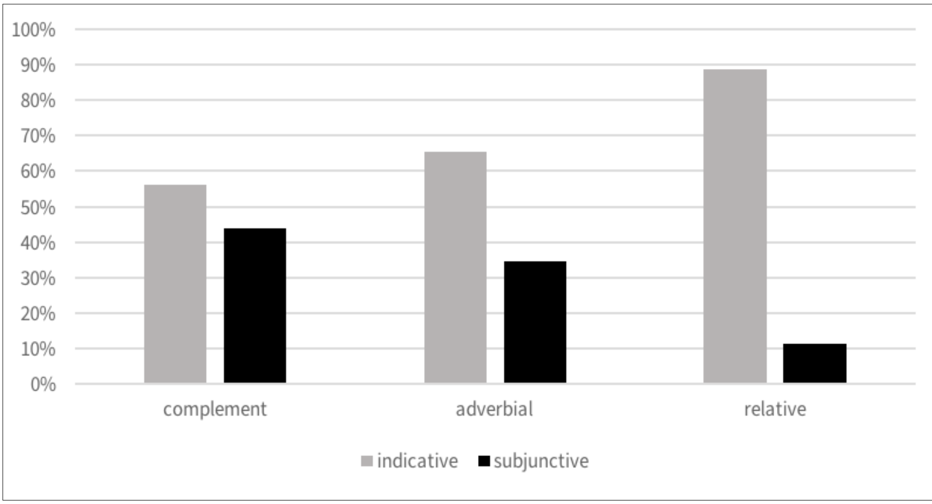


Figure 2. Mood in complement, adverbial and relative clauses

	complement		adverbial		relative	
indicative	1,800	56%	3,178	66%	2,622	89%
subjunctive	1,409	44%	1,669	34%	332	11%

Table 2. Mood in complement, adverbial and relative clauses

In the next sections, we will discuss the single clause types separately.

4.1 Complement Clauses

As pointed out in Section 3 above, mood alternations in complement clauses in OHG depend on the semantic properties of the embedding predicate, which also interact with negation, modalization, and other semantic operators in the matrix clause, see Schrodt (1983, 2004, 184 ff.), Petrova (2013), Abraham and Nishiwaki (forthcoming) (also cf. Behaghel 1928, 571 ff.).

The interaction of the semantic properties of the matrix predicate and the presence of questions, negation or modalization in the matrix clause are demonstrated for the verb *wizzan* (know). This verb selects a comple-

tive, conditional or interrogative operator can license the subjunctive in relative clauses (cf. Catasso, Hinterhölzl 2016; Coniglio 2007).

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ment whose content is claimed to be true by the subject, i.e. the complement clause is in the indicative if the matrix clause is a non-modalized affirmative clause as in (34). But the presence of semantic operators overwrites the selecting properties of the governing predicate, i.e., if *wizzan* is in the scope of a modal or an interrogative operator, the complement clause displays the subjunctive, as shown in (35).

(34) wir **wízun** thaz gizámi, thaz thu fon góte **quami** (O II, 12, 8)
we know this well that you from God.DAT came.IND
'We know that you came from God'

(35) Wio meg ih **wízzan** thanne, thaz uns kínd **werde** (O I, 4, 55)
how can I know then that us child becomes.SUBJ
'How can I get to know that we will have a child?'

In addition, we referred to the observation put forward by Petrova (2013) that the notion of (non-)veridicality, as outlined for Modern Greek and Romance, plays a role in the selection of verbal mood in OHG, in that complements of veridical verbs like those in (6a-e) display both the indicative and the subjunctive, while non-veridical verbs like those in (7a-e) strictly select the subjunctive.

To test this hypothesis, we conducted a corpus study determining the mood choice of complement clauses of selected representatives of the respective classes. We only accounted for complements of matrix clauses which are affirmative and non-modalized. The results of the corpus search in ReA are given in (table 3).[8]

	veridical verbs				**non-veridical verbs**		
	sagen **'say'**	***quedan*** **'say'**	***zellen*** **'tell'**	***gilouben*** **'believe'**	***bitten*** **'ask, request'**	***gibiotan*** **'order, command'**	***wellen*** **'want'**
indicative	9	6	1	33	0	0	0
subjunctive	2	15	1	0	24	21	13

Table 3. Mood alternations in adverbial clauses

8 We used the query in (i) applied to all verbs in table 3 to retrieve those cases in which they select *daz* 'that'-complements, and determined the verbal mood in these clauses. Note that the low numbers of conclusive examples are due to the restrictedness of the data set, which only includes complements of predicates in affirmative non-modalized matrix clauses.

(i) clause & clause & lemma="sagen" & lemma="daz" & pos="KOUS" & #1_i_#3 & #2_i_#4 & #4_=_#5 & #1.#2

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The corpus search confirms that the selectional properties of typical veridical verbs (such as assertive *zellen* ‘tell’ and epistemic *gilouben* ‘believe’) and of typical non-veridical verbs (such as volitional *wellen* ‘want’ and directive *gibiotan* ‘request’) support the analysis in Petrova (2013) that (non-)veridicality determines the selection of verbal mood in OHG. We discovered that the indicative never occurs in complements of non-veridical verbs, while both the indicative and the subjunctive are possible in embedded reports.

At the same time, we observed that the presence of negative, modal or interrogative operators increases the number of subjunctives for all classes of matrix verbs, including veridical ones. We demonstrate this for *gilouben* ‘believe’ in (36)-(37).

(36)	**giloubet**	ír	thaz	íh	íu	thaz	tuon	**mugi**	?	(T 61, 2)
	believe	you.PL	that	I	you.DAT.PL	that	do.INF	can.SUBJ.1SG		

‘Do you believe that I can do this to you’

(37)	Ni	giloubtun		thie	Iudæi	fon	imo	
	NEG	believed		the	Jews	about	him	
	thaz	her	blint	uuari		inti	gisahi	(T 132, 11)
	that	he	blind	was.SUBJ.3SG		and	saw.SUBJ.3SG	

‘The Jews did not believe about him that he had been blind and received his sight’

This picture is consistent with our hypothesis outlined in § 3, suggesting that non-veridicality triggers the subjunctive in complements in OHG. The non-veridical feature is either conveyed by the non-veridical matrix predicate, or by the presence of non-affirmative/non-declarative operators overriding the selecting properties of a veridical type of predicate.

4.2 Adverbial Clauses

Following the literature, we expect that the various semantic classes of adverbial clauses should behave differently with respect to the selection of the indicative and the subjunctive. This expectation is borne out by the data. We conducted corpus queries determining the distribution of the indicative vs subjunctive in the individual types of adverbial clauses distinguished in ReA.[9] Table 4 reveals the results of these queries. The numbers suggest that there are significant differences across the individual types

9 The queries were formulated in the way displayed in (i) and (ii), conducted for each individual class of adverbials distinguished in the annotation:

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of adverbial clauses, with the subjunctive – for instance – scoring 87.7% in intentional contexts like purpose clauses, but only 3.4% in causal clauses (see also fig. 3).

	causal		temporal		local		modal	
indicative	821	97%	880	87%	101	82%	656	80%
subjunctive	28	3%	129	13%	22	18%	159	20%

	conditional		consecutive		concessive		purpose	
indicative	455	61%	98	41%	33	32%	114	12%
subjunctive	288	39%	141	59%	71	68%	817	88%

Table 4. Mood alternations in adverbial clauses

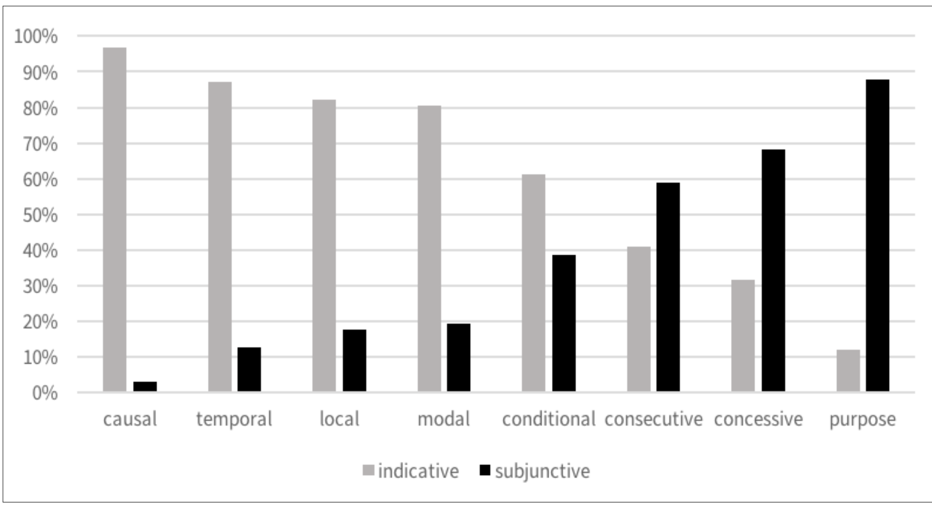


Figure 3. Mood alternations in adverbial clauses

We expect to discover differences between various classes of one and the same type of adverbial clause. By way of example, we will discuss two group of adverbial clauses, one in which it is the semantic type of the adverbial that determines the mood of the subordinate clause (temporal clauses) and one in which it is the lexical type of the subordinator that defines mood (concessive clauses).

(i) clause=/.*Temp/ & inflection=/IND.*/ & #1_i_#2 & meta::language=“ahd.”
(ii) clause=/.*Temp/ & inflection=/SUBJ.*/ & #1_i_#2 & meta::language=“ahd.”

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Temporal clauses expressing a posterior or an anterior event differ with respect to whether they are entailed (or not) by the matrix clause. As already outlined above, only anterior temporal clauses, i.e. those introduced by the equivalent of English *before*, represent a type of a non-veridical context requiring the subjunctive in Modern Greek. In contrast, posterior temporal clauses, i.e. those introduced by *when*, act as veridical contexts displaying the indicative. This distribution can be exemplified for OHG by virtue of (38) vs (39). But note that Erdmann (1973, 123) accounts for cases in which the indicative is also used in temporal *er*-clauses in OHG, see (40):

(38) Er sé joh hímil **wurti** (O II, 1, 3)
before sea and sky became.SUBJ.3SG
'Before sea and sky were created'

(39) Thô sie thar **uuarun** (T 5, 13)
when they there were.IND.3PL
'When they were there'

(40) er er wórolt **worahta** (O V, 23, 26)
before he world created.IND.3SG
'before he created the world'

We conducted a pilot study aiming to determine the distribution of the indicative and the subjunctive in temporal clauses introduced by *er* (before) and *do* (when) in OHG. The results are displayed in table 5.

	indicative	**subjunctive**	**total**
***do* (when)**	145 (100%)	0	145
***er* (before)**	14 (29%)	34 (71%)	48

Table 5. Distribution of mood in temporal clauses introduced by *do* and *er*

It turns out that the sharp contrast between the indicative and the subjunctive in the two classes of temporal clauses known from Modern Greek only partly applies to OHG. While the subjunctive never occurs in *do*-clauses, *er*-clauses display a high preference for the subjunctive, accounting for 71% of the cases, but the indicative is attested in the remaining 29% of the data. We cannot detect any semantic difference between the indicative and the subjunctive in *er*-clauses that might account for the choice of the one mood over the other in these cases. So we argue that there is free variation between the various mood forms in *er*-clauses already in OHG, which potentially will give rise to the loss of the subjunctive in this domain in the later development of the language.

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Another correlation applies between the lexical type of the subordinator and the selection of mood forms in one and the same semantic class of adverbial clauses, as exemplified by concessive clauses in OHG. As the results in table 4 revealed, the subjunctive is preferred over the indicative in this type of adverbial clauses. At the same time, there is variation regarding the lexical type of concessive subordinators in OHG. The default concessive subordinator is *thoh* (although), but subordinators like *mit thiu*, *ob* and *sôwio* are also attested. We determined the rate of the subjunctive in clauses introduced by *thoh* and any alternative in concessive clauses in ReA.[10] The results are represented in table 6:

	indicative	subjunctive
thoh	9	59
other	24	12
total	33	71

Table 6. Distribution of mood in concessive clauses

Following table 6, the tendency to use the subjunctive in concessive clauses introduced by *thoh* is significantly higher than for concessive clauses in general. Note that if we look into the annotation, we discover that among the 9 forms annotated for the indicative, the mood form is actually ambiguous between the indicative and the subjunctive in 6 of the cases. In only 3 cases do we find unambiguous indicative forms in a concessive clause introduced by *thoh*. Note, however, that in view of the fact that there is verb movement in one of these clauses (see 41), it is plausible to assume that these are main clauses displaying an adverbial connector *thoh* (despite this) in first position, which is homonymous with the concessive adverbial subordinator *thoh* in adverbial concessive clauses.

(41)	thoh	ni	**hábat**	er	iro	méra	(O IV, 6, 9)
	despite.this	NEG	has.IND	he	of.them	more	
	'despite this, he does not have more of them'						

10 We specified the original queries for concessive clauses in the indicative and the subjunctive for the condition that these clauses should be introduced by the lemma *doh* or by any alternative subordinator:

(i) clause=/.*Cnc/ & inflection=/IND.*/ & lemma="doh" & #1_i_#2 & #1_l_#3 & meta::language="ahd."
(ii) clause=/.*Cnc/ & inflection=/SUBJ.*/ & lemma="doh" & #1_i_#2 & #1_l_#3 & meta::language="ahd."

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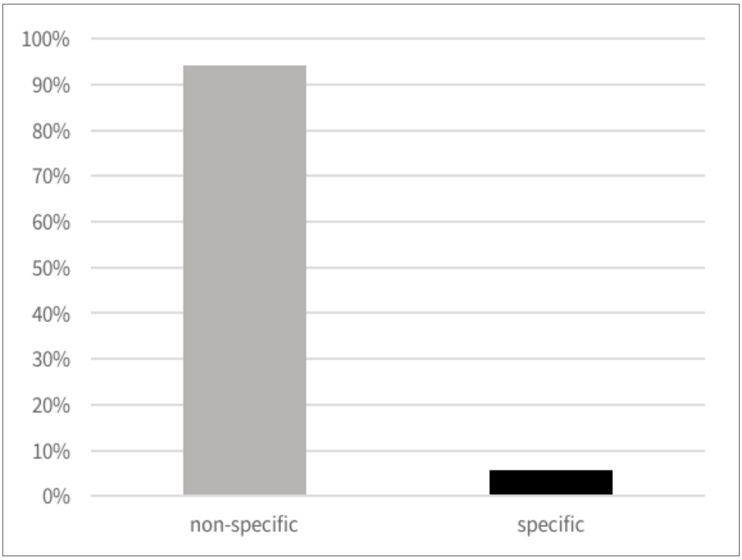


Figure 4. Distribution of the subjunctive in (non-)specific contexts

***thoh*-indicative**	3 (4.8%)
***thoh*-subjunctive**	53 (85.5%)
***thoh*-indicative=subjunctive**	6 (9.7%)

Table 7. Distribution of mood in concessive clauses introduced by thoh

To conclude, the subjunctive is not licensed across the board, but rather by adverbial complementizers in those adverbial clauses that do not presuppose the truth of the proposition (non-veridical contexts, Giannakidou 1994).

4.3 Relative Clauses

As to the licensing of mood in relative clauses in OHG, Coniglio (2017) points out the interaction between specificity and mood that is familiar from modern Romance languages. His pilot study is based on a small corpus of Early OHG texts (in ReA). The following examples illustrate the case of a specific referent with the indicative mood in the relative clause and a non-specific referent associated with the subjunctive mood in the dependent clause respectively:

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(42)	[…]	drúhtin	got	[…],	ther	únsih	**irlósta**	(O I, 10, 3f.)
		Lord	god		who	us	redeemed.IND	

‘God, our Lord, […] who redeemed us’

(43)	[…]	er	[…]	then	lésan	iz	**gilústi**	(O I, 1, 10)
		he		whom	read	it	pleased.SUBJ	

‘whoever felt like reading.’

The investigation of all subjunctive relative clauses in the whole reference corpus (n=422)[11] leads to very similar results, as is shown by table 8 and fig. 4.[12]

	non-specific		**specific**	
subjunctive	340	94%	21	6%

Table 8. Distribution of the subjunctive in (non-)specific contexts

Only very few cases are attested for the subjunctive occurring with a specific referent in the matrix DP. These can be explained by rhyme requirements, presence of modal verbs (or modalizing words), of negative polarity items, of a Latin source displaying the subjunctive, etc. In the following example, both rhyme and the presence of the negative polarity item *io* could be the reason for the use of the subjunctive in the relative clause:

(44)	[…]	thio	brústi,	thio	Kríst	io	**gikústi**	(O I, 11, 39)
		the	breasts	that	Christ	ever	kissed.SUBJ	

‘the breasts that Christ ever kissed’

11 na=61. Here, the total number of relative clauses diverges from the number indicated above because, for this calculation, also free relative clauses are considered, which – unfortunately – are annotated as complement clauses in ReA.

12 An anonymous reviewer points out that it would be interesting – by way of comparison – to report the data for the use of the indicative in the same contexts. Unfortunately, it is not possible to do so with respect to the whole corpus, since ReA is not annotated for specificity. However, Coniglio (2017, 254) discusses data from a smaller corpus that indicate that, in contrast to the subjunctive, the indicative is not more frequently used with non-specific referents (with a statistically significant difference between the indicative and the subjunctive, p=.0012).

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5 Syntactic Analysis and the Licensing of Mood

In syntax, one can find different approaches arguing that the licensing of mood affects the CP or the IP, or both domains (cf. Calabrese 1993; Poletto 1995, 2000; Giorgi, Pianesi 1997; Rivero 1988; Cinque 1999; Roberts, Roussou 2003, 88; Costantini 2009; Giorgi 2009; Damonte 2010; Ledgeway 2012; Mensching 2012). For the present analysis, we will assume that the CP and the projection Mood in the I-domain are responsible for the licensing of indicative/subjunctive mood alternations (cf. Damonte 2010; Rivero 1988; Calabrese 1993). Furthermore, we will adopt Zeijlstra’s (2012) notion of (upward) Agree (deviating from Chomsky 2000, 2001; Pesetsky, Torrego 2007; Bošković 2007), as defined below:

(45) *Agree*:
α can Agree with β iff:
a. α carries at least one uninterpretable feature and β carries a matching interpretable feature.
b. β c-commands α.
c. β is the closest goal to α.

(Zeijlstra 2012, 514)

Elaborating on Coniglio (2017), we will consider below how the licensing of the indicative/subjunctive alternations takes place in the different types of subordinate clauses.

5.1 Mood Licensing Configuration in Subordinate Clauses

We will argue that, in all types of subordinate clauses, the inflected verb exhibits an uninterpretable mood feature ([uInd] or [uSubj]), which probes for its counterparts in Mood (cf. Ledgeway 2012 for a similar approach). Furthermore, the heads C (or – in a cartographic approach – some head in the complex (split) C-domain) and Mood are assumed to exhibit a feature encoding (non-)veridicality in complement and adverbial clauses, but possibly (non-)specificity in relative clauses (cf. Coniglio 2017). Thus, due to the different syntax and semantics of complement, adverbial and relative clauses, the Agree mechanism is assumed to be slightly different in each of the three types of subordinate clauses. In the literature, (non-)veridicality and (non-)specificity have been shown to be encoded or licensed in different syntactic projections in the C- and D-domain.

As to complement clauses, at least certain types are assumed to be syntactically and semantically dependent on the matrix clause (cf. Hooper, Thompson 1973; Haegeman 2006). It is plausible that the syntactic integration of non-veridical/non-assertive complements favours the licensing

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of the subjunctive in contexts required by the matrix predicate. Extending the approach in Coniglio (2017), we assume that, in complement clauses, the uninterpretable feature for (non-)veridicality is licensed via Agree with the correspondent feature on the verb in the matrix clause:[13]

(46) $[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{iVerid}]} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Compl}}\ \text{C}_{[\text{uVerid}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iInd}]\,[\text{uVerid}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{uInd}]}\,]\,]$ *Agree*
$[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{iVerid}]} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Compl}}\ \text{C}_{[\cancel{\text{uVerid}}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iInd}]\,[\cancel{\text{uVerid}}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\cancel{\text{uInd}}]}\,]\,]$ → indicative

(47) $[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{i}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Compl}}\ \text{C}_{[\text{u}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iSubj}]\,[\text{u}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{uSubj}]}\,]\,]$ *Agree*
$[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{i}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Compl}}\ \text{C}_{[\cancel{\text{uVerid}}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iSubj}]\,[\cancel{\text{uVerid}}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\cancel{\text{uSubj}}]}\,]\,]$ → subjunctive

For this Upward Agree mechanism to work under Chomsky's (2001) phase theory, one must obligatorily assume – following Zeijlstra (2012) – that the feature for veridicality is present at the phase edge, i.e. in C-domain. This is straightforward, given that mood alternations (and other properties of adverbial clauses) seem to only depend on the lexical form of the complementizers in many languages (cf. Rivero 1988; Calabrese 1993; Damonte 2010; Ledgeway 2005, 2012; Giannakidou 2009; Padovan 2011).

In adverbial clauses, the licensing of mood is basically independent from the properties of the matrix clause, and thus semantically independent from it. Furthermore, Axel-Tober (2012) argues that the syntactic status of adverbial clauses in OHG and (early) MHG is that of non-integrated clauses. This supports the view that the subjunctive is not licensed via the matrix clause in adverbial clauses. Hence, the feature for (non-)veridicality must be interpretable in the C-domain of the adverbial clause (at the latest) and thus be independent from the properties of the main clause, as illustrated below:

(48) $[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Adv}}\ \text{C}_{[\text{iVerid}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iInd}]\,[\text{uVerid}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{uInd}]}\,]\,]$ *Agree*
$[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Adv}}\ \text{C}_{[\text{iVerid}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iInd}]\,[\cancel{\text{uVerid}}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\cancel{\text{uInd}}]}\,]\,]$ → indicative

(49) $[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Adv}}\ \text{C}_{[\text{i}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iSubj}]\,[\text{u}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\text{uSubj}]}\,]\,]$ *Agree*
$[_{\text{CP1}} \ldots [_{\text{CP2-Adv}}\ \text{C}_{[\text{i}\neg\text{Verid}]} \ldots \text{Mood}_{[\text{iSubj}]\,[\cancel{\text{u}\neg\text{Verid}}]} \ldots \text{V}_{[\cancel{\text{uSubj}}]}\,]\,]$ → subjunctive

This comes as no surprise since, in adverbial clauses, beside the semantic type of the clause, it is the lexical form of the subordinator that determines mood in many languages (Giannakidou 2009). Both the semantic type of the clause and the subordinator are assumedly encoded in C.

13 See Abraham, Nishiwaki (forthcoming), who adopts Coniglio's (2017) analysis to explain the licensing of OHG and MHG negated complements. See a similar proposal in Ledgeway (2012) with respect to some Southern Italian dialects.

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In (restrictive) relative clauses, mood licensing depends on the semantic properties of the referring expression (cf. Quer 1998; Giannakidou 2013, etc.), in particular on its (non-)specificity (cf. Schrodt 2004, 195 ff.). Syntactically, restrictive relatives are embedded in the matrix DP in which their antecedent is hosted.[14] Specificity is argued to be encoded on the D head of the antecedent (cf. Enç 1991; Cardinaletti, Giusti 1992, 2002; Campbell 1996; Zamparelli 2000; Guillemin 2007; Sio 2008). The head with the feature for (non-)specificity probes for its counterpart in the superordinate D:[15]

(50) $[_{DP}\ D_{[iSpec]} \dots [_{CP\text{-}Rel}\ C_{[uSpec]} \dots \text{Mood}_{[iInd]\,[uSpec]} \dots V_{[uInd]}\ ] \dots NP\ ]$ *Agree*
$[_{DP}\ D_{[iSpec]} \dots [_{CP\text{-}Rel}\ C_{[\cancel{uSpec}]} \dots \text{Mood}_{[iInd]\,[\cancel{uSpec}]} \dots V_{[\cancel{uInd}]}\ ] \dots NP\ ]$ → indicative

(51) $[_{DP}\ D_{[i\neg Spec]} \dots [_{CP\text{-}Rel}\ C_{[u\neg Spec]} \dots \text{Mood}_{[iSubj]\,[u\neg Spec]} \dots V_{[uSubj]}\ ] \dots NP\ ]$ *Agree*
$[_{DP}\ D_{[i\neg Spec]} \dots [_{CP\text{-}Rel}\ C_{[\cancel{u\neg Spec}]} \dots \text{Mood}_{[iSubj]\,[\cancel{u\neg Spec}]} \dots V_{[\cancel{uSubj}]}\ ] \dots NP\ ]$ → subjunctive

Notice that the explanation for appositive relative clauses is different. They are semantically and syntactically more independent and their mood is not licensed by properties of the D head in which their antecedent is hosted (cf. Coniglio 2017, 262).

5.2 Diachronic Loss of Mood Alternations in Subordinate Clauses

As already pointed out, the indicative is not only attested in OHG veridical contexts, but also very frequently in non-veridical ones. This reminds of a phenomenon that may be observed in Colloquial or Substandard Italian, in which the indicative is replacing the subjunctive in many contexts (cf. Catasso, Hinterhölzl 2016). If this is true also for OHG, then the loss of the subjunctive in MG subordinate clauses would come as no surprise. In fact, Coniglio (2017) links this loss to well-known morphological changes taking place in the history of German (the impoverishment of verb morphology and the ensuing loss of clear mood distinctions, the emergence of periphrastic forms for realising mood alternations, etc.).

14 See Cinque (2008a, 2008b, 2013) for the base position of relative clauses in the DP.

15 A further (uninterpretable) feature [uV] could be assumed to be optionally present in C in indicative cases (cf. Coniglio 2017, 262 fn. 7). This would require the movement of the verb to C in V2 relative clauses. This would allow for the event argument of the predicate in the relative clause to be anchored to the utterance situation, as hypothesized in Catasso, Hinterhölzl (2016, 20).

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Based on this empirical fact, we could speculate that the lack of clear morphological distinctions on the verb might have led to the reinterpretation of the feature on V and Mood as a default [Ind] feature in all contexts, independently of the value of the feature for veridicality/specificity (also in non-veridical/specific contexts):

(52) $[_{CP1} \ldots [_{CP2\text{-}Adv}\ C_{[i\neg Verid]} \ldots Mood_{[iInd]\,[u\neg Verid]} \ldots V_{[uInd]}\ ]\ ]$ *Agree*
$[_{CP1} \ldots [_{CP2\text{-}Adv}\ C_{[i\neg Verid]} \ldots Mood_{[iInd]\,[\cancel{u\neg Verid}]} \ldots V_{[\cancel{uInd}]}\ ]\ ]$ → indicative

The investigation of this diachronic development (probably taking place in the ENHG period) must be left for future research.

6 Conclusions

To sum up, the factors determining mood alternations in OHG were shown to be the same as those described for Greek and Romance languages. In general, it was argued that there are possibly two factors responsible for the licensing of the subjunctive in OHG, namely veridicality in complement and adverbial clauses, whilst relative clauses seem to require non-specific contexts for the licensing of the subjunctive. We modelled the licensing of mood alternations in OHG according to a feature-based Upward Agree mechanism, which makes the licensing of mood dependent on the internal and external syntax of the subordinate clause, as well as on the semantic and pragmatic properties of the matrix clause. An in-depth investigation of MHG and ENHG data is still necessary to describe the change scenario that has led to the loss of mood alternations in subordinate clauses in the following stages of the language.

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Towards a Fine-Grained Theory of Focus

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Abstract This paper investigates the roles of focus, arguing that such a notion is too wide and can be applied to several phenomena. I show that focus needs to be further specified for (at least) another feature and is therefore made of smaller primitive traits. These can combine to create bundles of features, which give rise to the several types of foci we know. Moreover, these features are subject to parametrization and can thus account for cross-linguistic differences.

Keywords Syntax. Left periphery. Focus. Focalisation. Focus movement.

1 Introduction

As is well-known from the literature on the topic, the term focus refers to different phenomena regarding the information structure of a discourse.[1] Its role has been investigated on the basis of the novelty it introduces (Jackendoff 1972), or the presence of relevant alternatives for the interpretation of linguistic expressions (Rooth 1992; Krifka 2008). However, these definitions are very wide: they can be applied to different types of focalisation, as they are able to capture many interpretive properties, but they do not allow us to truly grasp such a phenomenon.

It is still unclear how many kinds of foci exist, and to what extent we can talk about a grammaticalized difference between them. Nonetheless, this is a fundamental aspect to be considered when dealing with focalisation. In this paper I address this issue from a syntactic perspective, keeping into

1 I wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments and insights, as well as the audience of the workshop *Word Order in the Left Periphery*, held at the University of Oslo on October 17-18, 2018.

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account also pragmatic and prosodic properties. My proposal is that (i) focus has to be considered as a general feature that needs to be decomposed into smaller primitive features, (ii) such features are universal, and (iii) they can combine to create bundles of features; (iv) the compositionality of these features gives rise to the types of foci attested cross-linguistically and (v) they are subject to parametrization depending on the language.

In this paper I will mainly discuss Italian focalisation, offering also insights about other languages. In Italian some foci can be realised in different positions in the sentence. Such apparent freedom has led to many problems: (i) does the focused constituent move? And if it does, (ii) what is the trigger of displacement? (iii) Are there projections dedicated to focus? And (iv) how many are there, and where are they located in the derivation? Finally, (v) if the focalised element has to move, why is it also possible to realise it in a lower position? The latter point introduces the problem of optionality of movement that, according to a minimalist approach, should be avoided whenever possible. In fact, we cannot explain why we have displacement in a sentence whose derivation would converge anyway: if the lack of movement does not generate a crash, then displacement should never occur. I will analyse these issues taking into account existing approaches to focalisation.

The paper is organised as follows: § 2 discusses the focus typology, presenting focus types and the various differences among them. In § 3 previous approaches to focus are briefly discussed, taking into account criterial models and prosodic approaches. § 4 presents some syntactic properties of focalisation, with a particular reference to its movement (or lack of), based on (i) weak cross-over effects, (ii) n-words licensing and (iii) parasitic gaps licensing. § 5 presents and discusses the hypothesis of feature compositionality that is connected to the structural positions of focus, its movement and cross-linguistic differences. In § 6 conclusions can be found.

2 Focus Typology Reconsidered

In order to explain the different properties of focalisation, I will distinguish some focus types on different levels: pragmatically, prosodically and syntactically. Data are mainly from Italian, but other languages will also be briefly considered. The basic distinction between focus types has often been the one among information – *presentational* in Kiss’ (1998) terms – and contrastive focalisation.[2] However, I will argue that we refer to different phenomena by means of the same term, and I will therefore

2 Although such a distinction is not always recognised by scholars: see Brunetti (2004) for an analysis where new information focus and contrastive focus are taken to be the same construction.

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propose a more fine-grained typology. What is common to all types of foci is that they corresponds to the most informative part of a sentence, and for this reason they have prosodic prominence.

The sentences presented here are always preceded by a context, in order to ensure the right interpretation and a correct intonation. This is crucial in sentences containing a focused element, given that the marked order is licensed thanks to context and prosody.

2.1 New Information Focus

New information focus is often used in answering *wh*- questions: the focused element corresponds to the *wh*- constituent. Its role is introducing new information in the discourse. The *wh*- question presents a set of alternatives, and the answer usually chooses one of these as the correct one. Notice that they refer to an *open* set of alternatives (Kiss 1998), namely there is no need of a semantic antecedent. See examples in (1):

(1) a. Chi ha incontrato Gianni ieri?
who has met Gianni yesterday
'Who did John meet yesterday?'
b. Gianni ha incontrato Maria.
Gianni has met Maria
c. *Maria Gianni ha incontrato.
Maria Gianni has met
'John met Mary.'

In (1b) *Maria* is an example of *Information Focus*, and is thus the constituent interpreted as new information. Information foci are marked by main sentential stress. In Italian they can appear only in a low position in the sentence, and if we move such constituent, as in (1c), the sentence is out.[3]

3 Samek-Lodovici (2016, 6) argues that in Italian focus fronting of the information kind can be an appropriate answer, as the exchange in (i).

(i) A: Chi ha vinto la gara?
'Who won the race?'
B: Maria ha vinto!
C: Ha vinto Maria!
'Maria won.'

However, it seems to me that a sentence like (iB) is an appropriate answer only if uttered under some specific circumstances, as in the case the speaker does not expect/believe that information (or thinks that the hearer does not believe that information), or she/he is disappointed. Basically, a new information focus is allowed to be fronted only if an implicit presupposition is present, but not in a neutral information-seeking context (see also Belletti, Rizzi 2015 on this point). We could thus analyse the focused constituent *Maria* in (iB) as a mixture of information and mirative focus, which will be discussed in section 2.4. Notice

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Although there is a general tendency for several languages to realise new information in a sentence final, or later than usual, position (Drubig 2001), there are some cases where movement to the left is not only licensed, but the only available option. This is the case of Sicilian (Cruschina 2012) and Sardinian (Jones 1993; Mensching, Remberger 2010):

(2) a. Chi scrivisti?
what you.wrote
‘What did you write?’
b. N’articulu scrissi.
an article I.wrote
‘I wrote an article.’
(Cruschina 2012, 58, examples 33a,b)

(3) a. Comporatu l’as?
you.bought it have
‘Did you buy it?’
b. Emmo, comporatu l’appo.
yes,.bought it have
‘Yes, I bought it.’
(Jones 1993, 355, examples 131a,b)

(2b) shows that the appropriate position for information focus in Sicilian is fronted in the left periphery, and the same goes for (3b) in Sardinian.[4]

2.2 Contrastive Focus

Contrastive focus has to be differentiated from corrective focus, as noted by Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015, 2016). The two are distinct in many respects, as I will briefly explain in the next section. Purely contrastive focalisation expresses a contrast between a focused element and a parallel one, involving reference to at least two alternatives. Contrary to

that the same interpretation can be obtained in (iC), where the focused constituent is in a lower position, which is also the preferred alternative for Italian. However, this interpretation is possible only if the same prosodic contour is used. The prosodic contour of such constituent should be studied, in order to detect similarities with mirative focalisation, but I leave this issue open for future research.

4 Crucially, the fact that in Sicilian and Sardinian both information and corrective focus occur in a fronted position allow us to compare their syntactic behaviour in such a position. See Cruschina (2012) for a detailed analysis explaining their differences with respect to several phenomena: (i) information focus requires to be adjacent to the verb, even when fronted in the left periphery, whereas this is not true for corrective focus; (ii) partial movement is not accepted with information focus; (iii) corrective focus is not sensitive to weak islands, contrary to information focus. Given these differences, we can state that the two are to be considered as different types.

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information focus, it refers to a *closed* set of alternatives. The non-focal part does not have to be given.

(4) a. Il mio amico Gianni ha fame, ma so che è a dieta.
‘My friend John is hungry, but I know that he is on a diet.’
b. Ti conviene mangiare un’INSALATA (, non la pasta).
To.you be.better eat a salad not the pasta
c. *Un’INSALATA ti conviene mangiare (, non la pasta).
a salad to.you be.better eat not the pasta
‘You’d better eat a salad (, not pasta).’

Example in (4b) represents a case of *contrastive focus*: the focused constituent *un’insalata* has a salient alternative in the context, i.e. *la pasta* (or any other food not appropriate for a diet), and there is a contrastive import connected to them, but no presupposition associated. Crucially, these are realised *inside* the same speech act (Bianchi 2013, 2015), which means that the semantic antecedent is realised at the same time of its contrast. Notice that a contrastive focus is pragmatically felicitous only when in situ, as in (4b), but it cannot be moved to a fronted position (4c).[5]

2.3 Corrective Focus

Corrective focus was previously called contrastive focus in the literature, but it can actually be considered a subtype of merely contrastive focalisation (Bianchi, Bocci 2012; Bianchi, Bocci, Cruschina 2015). This is used for denying or correcting a previous assertion or presupposition that the speaker does not share. As in the case of contrastive focus, it refers to a *closed* set of alternatives, but here a semantic antecedent is needed: the non-focal part must be given.

(5) a. Ieri Gianni ha letto un libro.
yesterday Gianni has read a book
‘Yesterday John read a book.’
b. Gianni ha letto UN ARTICOLO (, non un libro).
Gianni has read an article not a book
c. UN ARTICOLO ha letto Gianni (, non un libro).
an article has read Gianni not a book
‘John read an ARTICLE (,not a book).’

5 As proved by an experiment run by Bianchi and Bocci (2012): sentences with contrastive focus in situ were preferred over their alternatives with fronted focus in the 98.1% of the utterances. Notice that sentence (4c) can be appropriate if I see John eating pasta in front of me. This is someway expected, since it would be considered as a case of corrective focalisation, where it is not a sentence previously uttered that needs to be corrected, but rather the alternative present in the context itself. If this is the case, the intonation connected to focus changes according to its interpretation.

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In both examples (5b) and (5c) we have a *Corrective Focus*: the alternative that needs to be corrected by the speaker, namely *il libro*, is realised in the previous utterance, whereas the correction *un articolo* is uttered by another speaker. The focused constituent is connected to a special stress and it can appear in several positions in the clause: it is licensed in its base position, as in (5b), but also in a fronted one (5c).[6]

To better understand the differences among contrastive and corrective focus consider sentences in (6):

(6) a. Maria era molto elegante l’altra sera a teatro
Maria was really elegant the other night at (the) theater
b. L’altra sera a teatro, Maria si era messa uno straccetto di H&M.
the other night at (the) theater Maria wore a cheap-dress from H&M
c. Si era messa un ARMANI, non uno straccetto di H&M
she.wore an Armani (dress), not a cheap dress from H&M
(Bianchi, Bocci 2012, 2, examples 2, 3,4)

If (6c) follows (6b), the speaker is correcting a piece of information contained in the previous assertion, hence it is a corrective focus and it can be fronted to an initial position. However, if (6c) follows a more ‘neutral’ sentence such as (6a), it has a contrastive import: no correction is needed, but the focused object contrasts with the alternative of the negative tag, realised in the same utterance. Focus fronting is not acceptable in this case.

The differences among the two types can be summarised in: (i) distinct pragmatic contexts, (ii) both types are connected to contrast, but in corrective focus this is enriched with a corrective import, (iii) contrast is inside the same utterance in the case of contrastive focus, but across utterances in corrective focus, (iv) movement can be applied only to focus of the corrective kind, (v) in contrastive focus the non-focal material does not have to be given, while in corrective focus there has to be a background, and (vi) the two are realised with different intonational contours.[7] Finally, we can state that (vii) the factor distinguishing contrastive focus from corrective focus is that in the former the salient contextual alternative is implicit, while in the latter it is explicitly mentioned in the discourse.

6 Crucially, the special intonation is always the same, both when the constituent is realised in situ and when moved to the left periphery (Bocci, Avesani 2006; Bocci 2013).

7 See Bianchi and Bocci (2012) for a complete discussion regarding the above points, and Bocci (2013) for the prosodic analyses.

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2.4 Mirative Focus

Mirative focus expresses unexpected or surprising information that is not yet part of the system of beliefs of the interlocutors (see Cruschina 2012). The non-focal material does not have to be given, and in fact mirative focus can also be uttered in an 'out-of-the-blue' context.

(7) a. Pensa te! DI VENTI KILI è dimagrito!
think you of twenty kilos he.lost.weight
b. Pensa te! È dimagrito DI VENTI KILI!
think you he.lost.weight of twenty kilos
'Guess what! He lost twenty kilos!'

Sentences in (7) represent *mirative focalisation*. As in the case of corrective focus, it can be pronounced either clause-initially, (7a), or clause-finally, as in (7b). Mirative focus in Italian is realised with a special prosodic contour, distinct from the corrective one (Bianchi, Bocci, Cruschina 2015, 2016). Notice that in this case we do not need the presence of a salient proposition in the discourse. In fact, other alternatives more likely than the one expressed by the clause can be inferred from general background knowledge, if not from context. Alternatives are based on the expectations of the speaker. As noted by Bianchi (2015) the mirative import involves an evaluative component, because it is not only based on shared information, but also on a shared evaluative perspective.

2.5 Exhaustive Focus

Exhaustive Focus can identify a unique referent from the context. The focused constituent is the only one that leads to a true assertion (or it is the strongest option to do so). In several languages such an interpretation can be obtained with some particles (see *solo* for Italian), whereas in others it can be obtained through focus fronting. This is claimed to be the trigger of such an interpretation in Hungarian (Kiss 1998).[8]

(8) Tegnap este MARINAK mutattam be Pétert.
Last night Mary.dat I.introduced Peter.acc
'It was TO MARY that I introduced Peter last night.'
(Kiss 1998, 247 example 5)

8 But see Delfitto, Fiorin (2015) and Torregrossa (2012) for an analysis of fronted corrective focus in Italian as exhaustive.

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A sentence like (8) means that, out of a set of individuals present in the domain of discourse, Mary was the only one that was introduced to Peter. According to Kiss (1998), the exhaustive interpretation of (8) is open only for foci of the corrective kind and moved to a preverbal position, but not for new information focus.

In some languages, this interpretation can be obtained with a cleft sentence. It is the case of Italian and English.

(9) a. It was A HAT that Mary picked for herself.
b. Mary picked herself A HAT.
c. È GIANNI che Maria ha incontrato.
is Gianni that Maria has met
'It is JOHN that Mary met.'
d. Maria ha incontrato GIANNI.
Maria has met Gianni
'Mary met JOHN.'

(9a) means that the only thing that Mary chose from several pieces of clothing was a hat and nothing else, whereas in (9b) this interpretation is not available: in this case the hat is simply one of the possible things that Mary could have brought, but there is nothing that tells us that a hat was her only choice. The same goes for sentences in (9c) and (9d).[9]

Quite interestingly, exhaustivity seems to be realised with a particle in Hausa, a Chadic language (Hartmann, Zimmermann 2007). In fact, in such a language, focused constituents are marked by the particle *nee/cee*. However, this has some special properties either when focus is in situ or fronted: it is optional, and it can associate with the focused constituent at a distance. If *nee/cee* is simply a focus marker, these properties are unexpected. However, *nee/cee* is dependent on focus: when it is used, a focus must occur in the sentence. Interestingly, it seems to trigger an exhaustive interpretation, and if the particle is dropped the exhaustivity effect disappears, showing that the semantic effect is detachable (Hartmann, Zimmermann 2007). Therefore it seems that we can consider the particle *nee/cee* a marker of exhaustivity.

2.6 Some Unsolved Issues

To sum up the focus typology described in this section, in all the different realisations of focus we do find distinctions in the intonation connected to

9 The exhaustive interpretation of fronted focus in Hungarian and cleft sentences in English is supported by lexical restrictions, in that these are not grammatical if expressed with universal quantifiers, *also*-phrases, *even*-phrases and *some*-phrases, which can be explained given the incompatibility of exhaustivity with the lexical items above.

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them,[10] their distributional properties and their pragmatic contexts: the presuppositions for each focus type are different. Thus, we have to capture their different properties, and establish whether these are due to different projections in the structure.

A crucial point is that in Italian the left peripheral position is licensed only for two types of focus, i.e. corrective and mirative, whereas the in-situ position can be occupied by all of them. Focus fronting is therefore limited only to some focus types, and hence it is associated with some special effects on interpretation: the information falls outside the range of 'natural expectations', either of the interlocutor or of the speaker (Belletti, Rizzi 2015; Rizzi, Bocci 2017). We can say that focus fronting is associated with special effects on interpretation yielding out strengthening, unexpectedness, surprise, correction and exhaustivity, depending on the language considered. This is why focus typology plays such an important role in the establishment of the position hosting focus. Any hypothesis of focalisation must explain such different distributional properties.

3 A Critical Analysis of Previous Accounts

3.1 Criterial Approach

In cartographic approaches there is a one-to-one matching relation between the syntactic structure and its interpretation: interpretive effects are linked to specific positions. Therefore, the left periphery comprises a sequence of functional heads with a double role: in syntax they attract constituents with matching features, whereas at the interfaces they trigger interpretive procedures for the assignment of scope-discourse properties at LF, and the appropriate prosodic contour at PF. In the case of focus there is a [+ focus] feature that triggers movement of the focused constituent because of its need to be checked through a Spec-Head agreement with the focus head. In such a case, therefore, movement is obligatory, and the focused constituent must be displaced to the left periphery through A'-movement.[11]

10 As noted by Bocci (2013) the difference is signalled by pitch accents, but not by other prosodic properties.

11 The same Spec-Head relation has been proposed for many other constructions, as in the case of *wh-* questions. A fundamental difference, however, should be kept in mind: as far as Italian is concerned, a *wh-* constituent (and therefore its feature) always has to move in order to make the sentence grammatical. In the case of focus, there is no such requirement, given that it can also be in a low position. This approach is adopted by Rizzi (1997) for corrective focus, by Brunetti (2004) for both information and corrective focus, and by Belletti (2001, 2004) whose hypothesis nicely captures the differences between information and corrective focus, in that both of them have a dedicated projection: the latter in the left periphery of the sentence, the former in a clause internal periphery above *v*P.

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This hypothesis can easily explain a sentence with the focalised phrase realised in a fronted position. The same however cannot be said for focus in situ. Given that it has to move in order to check its feature, there are two options. In the first case, after displacement of focus the rest of the sentence has to move to a higher position (assuming that it reaches the topic projection preceding focus). In the second case, the focal element moves only at LF, i.e. movement is covert. The latter option is problematic: as noted by Frascarelli (2000), if focus is interpreted only at LF, how can stress be correctly assigned to it? This problem has to do with the T-model (Chomsky 1995) and the connections between the interfaces. In fact, in such a case, stress can only be assigned if we assume that PF and LF can communicate even after Spell-Out. On the other hand, if we assume that the checking relation between the feature and its head can be satisfied at a distance,[12] we have an additional problem: movement would never be the preferred option given that feature checking is realised anyway.[13]

After the description of focus typology in section 2, it is also clear that a major issue for a criterial approach is that it does not adequately explain why some types of focus cannot be fronted at all. If a feature [+ focus] is responsible for movement we would expect that focus can always be fronted, which is not the case. In fact, only two kinds of foci can be displaced: corrective and mirative. Therefore, a [+ focus] feature cannot account for the distributional properties of different types of focalisation.

3.2 Prosody-Driven Approaches

A completely different approach is the one of prosody-driven analyses, where discourse-related properties are not dependent on syntax, but rather on prosodic requirements.[14] For example, the proposal of in situ focalisation developed by Samek-Lodovici (2016) is connected to the role of prosody, since it provides the required alignment of stress with the position of prosodic prominence, i.e. the right edge of the clause in Italian

12 Following Agree (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

13 A major problematic point for any feature-driven approach, as noted by Zubizarreta (1998) and Szendrői (2001), is that the Inclusiveness Condition is violated, since features of discourse properties are not already contained in the lexicon entering the numeration. [+ focus] is considered as a diacritic introduced in the computation in order to account for something that is not directly related to the lexical item. However, see Aboh (2004) for the presence of focus (and topic) markers in some languages. This would favour the idea that a feature like focus is actually present in the lexicon.

14 Among others, see Reinhart (1995, 2006) Szendrői (2001, 2003, 2017), and Samek-Lodovici (2005, 2006, 2016).

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(Zubizarreta 1998).[15] The major claim of such a hypothesis is that focus occurs in situ and has no unique and fixed projection. Moreover, it does not have to move because it does not have to check any feature.

Following such a proposal, we can easily explain focus in a clause-final position, since it coincides with the typical position of stress assignment in Italian, and in fact it is the most frequently used order for focus. In the hypothesis of Samek-Lodovici (2016) when focus is in a clause-internal position it is not because of its movement, but rather because the rest of the sentence has moved through right-dislocation. Focus in a clause-internal position, hence, is actually focus in a clause-final position occurring with the right dislocation of the constituents following it. Once again, the position of focus depends on the main stress: it is in a rightmost position in order to satisfy the stress-assignment requirement.

As with other prosody-based analyses, this approach has some typical issues that have been already pointed out in the literature: (i) syntactic operations are triggered by prosodic requirements, thus prosody determines the syntactic structure and not the other way around; (ii) a modification of the T-model (Chomsky 1995) is required, given that prosody and syntax can communicate. This implies that there has to be a connection between LF and PF; in fact stress, i.e. a property of PF, is the operation responsible for the focus interpretation of a constituent at LF. Thus, the two interfaces have to be visible even after Spell-Out, and must also be able to communicate with one another.

However, a major problem of prosody-driven approaches is that focus typology is not taken into account, and thus they are not able to explain why the availability of the fronted position is restricted only to some of the focus interpretations, whereas some others have to stay low in the structure. Such an asymmetry cannot possibly be due to the role of prosodic requirement or to the right dislocated, i.e. given, status of the constituents following focus. This is true especially for mirative focalisation given the fact that the non-focal material does not have to be given, as seen in § 2.4. Moreover, we cannot think of focus fronting as an instance of contrast-related fronting (Neeleman et al. 2009; Szendrői 2017), given that (i) contrast cannot cover fronting in the case of mirative focus, which is connected to unexpected or surprising information, (ii) contrast cannot cover fronting in the case of new information focus in Sicilian and Sardinian, and (iii) mere contrast is not enough in order to license focus fronting, given the impossibility of fronting contrastive focus in Italian.

15 See Bocci (2013) for a different approach and the claim that rightmostness is violated in the case of fronted focalisation.

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3.3 The Double Nature of (Some) Foci

Notice that the approaches described so far cannot account for the asymmetries between a low focus position and a fronted one: why is it that displacement of a focused constituent is more constrained? Why does overt movement restrict the possible interpretations of focus? The hypothesis of Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015, 2016) takes these issues into account, and two projections are hypothesized in order to accommodate the data regarding the asymmetry between a fronted and a low position. The higher one, in the left periphery, can only host corrective and mirative focalisation, whereas the lower one can be occupied by all kinds of focus. Note that in order to maintain the T-model of grammar, there must be some active features in the syntactic structure triggering corrective or mirative interpretation, and providing instructions for the prosodic component as well. The solution proposed by Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015) can be found in (10):

(10) $[_{FP}\ \text{Force} \ldots [_{FaiP}\ \text{FAI}^{0}_{[mir]/[corr]}\ [_{FocP}\ \mathbf{YP}_{i[+foc]}\ \text{Foc}^{0}_{[+foc]} \ldots [_{TP} \ldots \langle\mathbf{YP}_{i}\rangle \ldots]]]]$

Whenever focus is realised lower in the structure, it has no assigned projection and it is realised in situ.[16] This is the basic order that is available for all kinds of foci. Given that in Italian corrective and mirative focalisation may also be realised in a fronted position, a projection in the left periphery is needed. The proposal of Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015) is that correction and mirativity are to be considered as conventional implicatures (CIs) in the sense of Potts (2007). CIs can add an additional meaning to the one expressed by at-issue entailments, therefore being syntactically encoded, and can be projected in the structure. Hence, CIs are associated with the activation of a left peripheral functional projection, whose head bears an implicature-triggering feature called FAI, i.e. 'focus-associated implicature' (Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina 2015). This head activates a FocP below it, triggering the movement of a focused constituent to the specifier of the criterial Foc head. Therefore, in the case of corrective or mirative focus, a FAI projection carrying either the corrective or mirative import of the sentence and a focus one are also activated in the left periphery of the clause.

Focus movement always applies and optionality depends on the syntax-prosody interface: both copies are present at PF and, following the copy deletion theory, only one is spelt out. The optionality depends therefore on the alternative linearization of one of the copies of the movement chain

16 Note that this part of the analysis is similar to the one offered by Samek-Lodovici (2016), given the lack of a feature that needs checking and of movement.

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and copy deletion can be applied either to the higher or the lower copy. In the former case focus in situ is obtained, whereas in the latter we have focus fronting.

The proposal described here therefore solves not only the problem of optionality of movement, but can also account for focus typology and for the connection between the position of focalisation and its interpretation. However, as it will be explained in the next paragraph, a double-copy theory has to face some problems with the data regarding the licensing of negative items and of parasitic gaps.

4 Syntactic Properties of Focalisation

In this paragraph, I will deal with some syntactic aspects of focused constituents in order to argue that (i) focus is moved when fronted in the left periphery, but not when it is in its base position, and that (ii) the projection dedicated to focus is one only.

4.1 On Movement Operations

As seen above, there is yet no agreement regarding whether focused constituents have to undergo movement: criterial models predict that there is always movement, both when it is fronted and when it is in a low position, whereas an approach á la Samek-Lodovici (2016) assumes that there is no movement at all. I will take into account three main aspects regarding this issue: (i) WCO effect, (ii) n-words licensing, and (iii) parasitic gaps licensing.

4.1.1 WCO Effect

Weak Cross-Over is a phenomenon that blocks co-reference between a pronoun and its antecedent if the antecedent is a quantified expression that binds a variable, and such variable follows the pronoun. Therefore, we can use WCO effect as a diagnostic tool to detect whether movement has applied in focused constituents.[17] Thus compare sentences in (11):

(11) a. Sua$_i$ madre ha sempre apprezzato GIANNI$_i$ (, non Piero).
his mother has always appreciated Gianni not Piero
b. ??/*GIANNI$_i$, sua$_i$ madre ha sempre apprezzato (non Piero).

17 Notice that the WCO effect in fronted constituents will be applied only to corrective and mirative focalisation, given what we saw regarding other types of foci.

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Gianni his mother has always appreciated not Piero
‘It is JOHN$_i$ that his$_i$ mother always appreciated (, not Piero).

Sentence in (11b) was used by Rizzi (1997) in order to show that, whenever corrective focalisation is found in a fronted position, it is the result of a movement operation. In fact, in such a case we obtain WCO effect, i.e. co-reference between the pronoun *sua* and *Gianni*, the antecedent, is blocked. The same cannot be said about (11a): focus is here in its base position, and no WCO effect arises, meaning that there has been no movement. Considering (11a), hence, there is something wrong with an analysis *á la* Rizzi (1997): in this case, it would not be correct to postulate movement to a fronted position, otherwise we also expect that (11a) cannot be accepted.

4.1.2 N-Words Licensing

A summary of the properties of Italian negative items is needed before presenting the relevant data. If negative items are realised lower than TP, they must be c-commanded by a proper licenser, either a sentential negative marker, as in (12a), or another n-word, as in (12b). If the n-word is not properly c-commanded, the sentence is ungrammatical as in (12c). The same is not true when the n-word occurs preverbally: if the negative word c-commands the finite verb, it can occur as the only negative element in the clause (12d).[18]

(12) a. *Non* è venuto *nessuno*.
Not is come nobody
‘Nobody came.’
b. *Nessuno* ha detto *niente*.
Nobody has said nothing
‘Nobody said anything.’
c. *È venuto *nessuno*.
is come nobody
‘Nobody came.’
d .*Nessuno* è venuto.
nobody is come
‘Nobody came.’

The same properties are expected when focalisation is involved, and therefore in a sentence like (13a) the focused negative phrase *nessuno* has to be in a c-command relation with its licenser, in this case *non*, whereas in a case like (13b) no c-command relation is expected.

18 Note that c-command must hold at surface, and not under reconstruction (Samek-Lodovici 2016, 299).

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(13) a. Non ho visto NESSUNO.
not I.have seen nobody
b. NESSUNO ho visto.
Nobody I.have seen
‘I saw NOBODY.’

As already noted by Cardinaletti (2001) and Samek-Lodovici (2016) such a relation is not respected under a left-peripheral approach. In an analysis *à la* Rizzi (1997), the negative focused phrase moves to SpecFocP, and the rest of the sentence is then moved to SpecTopP preceding the focus projection, so that the linear order is respected. The result of these operations is that *non* does not actually c-command the negative phrase, thus (13a) should be ungrammatical, but this prediction is not borne out. Moreover, in a left peripheral approach, the two focused negative items in (13a) and (13b) occupy the same position: SpecFocP. Their derivations would be similar, in that the focused n-words are hosted in a high preverbal position and therefore must not be c-commanded by another negative item. This is indeed the correct prediction for sentence in (13b), where the negative word actually occurs in a preverbal position and hence does not require licensing. However, the negative item in (13a) must be c-commanded, but this difference is not accounted for.

Interestingly, if we take focus to be realised in situ, we can explain these sentences. Since focus is in situ in (13a), the n-word is c-commanded by another negative element and the expected licensing relation is obtained. In the case of (13b), the focused constituent is in a higher projection than TP and for this reason no c-command relation is expected.

The hypothesis of Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015, 2016) correctly accounts for sentences in (13). In fact, in (13a) focus is in a postverbal position, and therefore it needs to be c-commanded by another negative element. In this case, the licensing is respected and the focused element *nessuno* is c-commanded by the sentential negative marker. In (13b) the copy that gets spelt out is the higher one, i.e. the one realised in the left periphery. *Nessuno* is therefore realised preverbally and does not need to be c-commanded by another constituent, so the sentence is grammatical. However, a double copy theory has a bigger problem: under Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015) optionality of movement is attributed to the PF interface, since both copies are present in syntax. If this is the case, the theory cannot account for any of the licensing relations seen above. In fact, licensing takes place in syntax, i.e. prior to PF. How would be possible to establish whether a n-word needs a licensor or not in this approach? The syntactic component would have to work with contrasting information.

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4.1.3 The Case of Parasitic Gaps

Another problem having to do with licensing conditions is constituted by parasitic gaps, i.e. gaps that depend on the presence of another gap in the same sentence. A parasitic gap is licensed by the antecedent of another real gap created by movement. When the parasitic gap occurs with focalisation, it can be licensed only by a clause-initial focus, and not by a postverbal one. Note the contrast between (14) and (15):

(14) [L'ARTICOLO] [Silvia ha recensito _] [senza leggere _] (, non il libro).
[the article] [Silvia has reviewed _] [without to.read _] not the book
'Silvia reviewed the article without reading (, not the book).'

(15) *Silvia ha recensito [l'ARTICOLO], [senza leggere _] (, non il libro).
Silvia has reviewed [the article] [without to.read _] not the book
'Silvia reviewed the article without reading (, not the book).'

Such a contrast cannot be explained in an analysis *à la* Rizzi (1997). In both (14) and (15) the focused object has to move to the left periphery and is hosted in SpecFocP. Its position correctly explains the grammaticality of (14), given that the parasitic gap is licensed by the gap created by movement of focus. However in the case of (15) the ungrammaticality cannot be accounted for: since the focused phrase reaches SpecFocP in a preverbal position, it is able to license the parasitic gap, and the sentence should be grammatical.

A hypothesis *à la* Samek-Lodovici (2016) can account for both (14) and (15): (15) is ungrammatical because if we consider focus to be in situ, it is hosted in a postverbal position and therefore cannot c-command the parasitic gap, being too low. The grammaticality of (14) is instead accounted for because focus evacuates the right dislocated constituent and adjoins the TP, reaching a position from where it can correctly license the parasitic gap.

Apparently, the proposal by Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2016) is also able to explain this asymmetry, in that in (14) the focused object is realised in a left peripheral position, i.e. the in situ copy is not pronounced, and it can therefore license the parasitic gap respecting the required c-commanding relation. It is not the same with (15), where the focused object is realised in its base position lower than VP, thus too low to c-command the parasitic gap. However, the double-copy hypothesis has to face another problem, namely the fact that, independently of the copy that gets spelt out, one of them has to undergo movement, hence licensing the parasitic gap, and therefore not explaining the ungrammaticality of (15). In fact, the only way to account for it would be to state that the licensing of parasitic gaps takes place in PF rather than in syntax.

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4.2 How Many Projections are There?

Turning to another crucial issue, I will now deal with how many projections dedicated to focus are present in a structure. Notice that several hypotheses were proposed in this respect: there is a unique and fixed position according to Rizzi (1997), Frascarelli (2000) and Brunetti (2004), whereas two fixed positions can be found in the analyses of Belletti (2001, 2004) and of Benincà and Poletto (2004).

When dealing with this problem, there is a crucial piece of evidence, namely the uniqueness of focus. There cannot be more than one focus per sentence, and this seems to be a universal rule: there are no languages allowing two foci in the same sentence. I will not deal here with the reasons why, other than the syntactic ones and I will not take into account whether these are connected to an interpretive problem (Rizzi 1997) or to a prosodic one. Notice at this point sentences in (16):

(16) a. *MARIA con GIANNI ha parlato, non Sara con Andrea.
Maria with Gianni has spoken not Sara with Andrea
b. *MARIA ha parlato con GIANNI, non Sara con Andrea.
Maria has spoken with Gianni not Sara with Andrea
c. *Ha parlato MARIA CON GIANNI, non Sara con Andrea.
Has spoken Maria with Gianni not Sara with Andrea.
‘It was MARY who spoke to JOHN, not Sara to Andrea.’

No co-occurrences of foci are possible, independently of their position in the sentence, as shown by the ungrammatical sentences in (16).[19] However, notice that sentences in (16) all deal with the same type of focus, i.e. corrective focalisation. Therefore, one may wonder whether co-occurrence of different types of foci is still possible. Sentence in (17) show that this is not the case:

(17) Non posso crederci! UN ANELLO, A LEO vogliono comprare!
not I.can believe.it a ring to Leo they.want to.buy
‘I can’t believe it! They want to buy a RING for LEO!’

The data presented here show therefore that we should postulate a unique

19 Notice that there seems to be at least one case in Italian in which two constituents can be focalised, i.e. when direct and indirect object are simultaneously in focus, as in (i):

(i) Ho dato UN LIBRO A GIANNI, non una penna a Maria.
I.have given a book to Gianni not a pen to Mary
‘It was A BOOK that I gave TO JOHN, not a pen to Mary.’

Depending on the syntactic analysis proposed for double object constructions, one might argue that in this case what is focalised is the macro-constituent formed by direct and indirect object. Thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out.

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projection dedicated to focus in each structure. I will deal later with where such a projection should be located.

5 Explaining Focus

A crucial issue at this point regards movement, lack of movement and its optionality (at least as far as Italian is concerned). We need to establish what triggers movement of focus, and clearly the [+ focus] feature postulated in criterial models cannot be responsible, because otherwise we would expect all foci to be displaceable. Focus typology has actually an important role in the establishment of the position hosting focus, and any hypothesis must explain such different distributional properties among them. Given what we saw in § 2, movement cannot be simply triggered by contrast (Vallduví, Vilkuna 1998), givenness (Samek-Lodovici 2016), exhaustivity (Horvath 2010), or by relevance (Cruschina 2012).

5.1 On the Compositionality of Features

If we keep into account the focus typology seen above and the differences involving several modules of grammar, we are forced to assume that these foci are syntactically different. I argue that such a difference can be accounted for under a further specification of the features they are made of, and therefore that the difference in their syntactic behaviour lies in the composition of their features. However, a general notion that can cover all the interpretive effects and the differences seen so far would be preferable to the option of assuming the existence of many focus categories associated with several features allowing (or not allowing) movement. Therefore, I propose that each focus type has a [+ focus] feature which can be connected and further specified with (at least) another one. Focus is considered as a macro-feature that has to be connected with (at least) another sub-feature, thus forming feature bundles (Neeleman et al. 2009). Focus is enriched with different features that can be combined among them.

Such a proposal would explain why there cannot be more than one focus per sentence: independently from its specification, any element marked by [+ focus] cannot co-occur with another one, i.e. each sentence can have at most one member belonging to the [+ focus] set.

Let us now consider how to describe the focus typology explained above. In the case of new information focus the composition would be a simple one: [+ focus] is connected to a [+ new] feature, given that it expresses new information but no contrast is actually involved or implied. We should keep in mind that for communicative purposes, each sentence contains information focus (Gundel 1999), because such a requirement follows from

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a necessary articulation of the sentence imposed by the grammar for information processing reasons (Cruschina 2012). This led some authors to question the status of new information focus, especially whether this can actually be considered a type of focus at all (Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina 2015). It has often been argued that the structure of new information focus (and the contexts in which it occurs) is actually parallel to an out-of-the-blue sentence: its syntactic properties are identical to those of a normal sentence, and apparently it is not connected to a particular intonation.[20] I will leave open for now the existence of a [+ new] feature, and assume that it has to be present given the cases of Sicilian and Sardinian, where new information focus can be moved to the left periphery.

Merely contrastive focus is instead made of [+ focus] and [+ contrast]. A [+ new] feature is not present given that the role of contrastive focus is evoking a closed set of alternatives within the same utterance. Moreover, the non-focal part does not have to be given, which means that an entire sentence containing contrastive focus can be new. Notice also that contrastive focus is not always connected to new information, at least from a referential point of view: pronouns can be focused. The presence of a [+ contrast] feature was already proposed in Vallduví & Vilkuna (1998), and Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007), and is supported by Finnish data on focalisation and topicalization, where it seems to require a special formal realisation, i.e. the position in the left periphery (Vallduví, Vilkuna 1998).

On the other hand, corrective focus needs a further specification. Its role is, as in the case of contrastive focus, to introduce a closed set of alternatives, but with a further specification, i.e. correction of a previous utterance. Therefore, it can be considered as a subtype of contrastive focalisation (Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina 2015) and hence described as [+ focus], [+ contrast] and [+ correction]. The [+ correction] is also needed given the asymmetries between corrective and contrastive focus seen for Italian.

Mirative focalisation can be described as [+ focus] and [+ mirativity], whereas exhaustive focus is made of [+ focus] and [+ exhaustivity]. The existence of a [+ exhaustive] feature is supported by the data from Hausa described in § 2.5, and in particular by the presence of what seems to be a particle dedicated to such an interpretation.

20 But see Belletti (2004) with respect to the different positions that are used by new information focus.

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5.2 The Position of Focus and Its Movement (or Lack Of)

Where should we represent focus in a structure? Considering the data on WCO effect, n-words licensing and parasitic gaps we know that there has to be a distinction among a focused constituent that is low and one that is higher. Such a distinction regards movement: the former does not move while the latter does. Therefore, I claim that focused constituents can occupy two positions, but only the higher one is a dedicated projection. This is in the left periphery and is somehow restricted, at least in Italian where it can be occupied only by corrective and mirative focalisation. Such a projection accounts for (i) general cases of fronted focused constituents; (ii) the presence of focus markers in some languages, as in the case of Gungbe (Aboh 2004), and possibly of Hausa; (iii) V2 phenomena in some languages, such as Armenian and Kashmiri, where the head of the focus projection seems to be required as a landing site for the verb (see Giorgi, Haroutyunian 2016).

The lower position is not actually dedicated to focus: I assume that whenever focus is realised low it is actually in its in situ position rather than in a dedicated lower projection *á la* Belletti (2004). In so doing, no movement needs to be applied and thus we can account for (i) licensing relation of n-words, (ii) lack of licensing relation of parasitic gaps with corrective focus in situ, (iii) lack of WCO effect when focus is realised lower in the sentence.

It may actually be the case that the presence of a [+focus] feature is able to activate the left peripheral projection, but such a feature by itself is not enough for a constituent to move. It is actually the combination with other features that allows movement of focus. Whenever a [+ focus] element is present in a sentence, the connected position in the left periphery is activated, and this gives information regarding the prosody and interpretation of the focused constituent even at a distance. In fact, only some of the features mentioned in § 5.1 can let focus move to a fronted position, whereas in some other cases displacement is not an option.[21]

The distributional properties of foci are different from a cross-linguistic point of view. In the account proposed here, the possibility of movement is explained with parametrization of the features described above. Depending on the language and the type of focus considered, the projection in the left periphery can be used, obtaining focus fronting, or it can be blocked. These possibilities are regulated by features and their composition. I will briefly explain how this works with some example of different languages, but this section needs further investigation.

In Italian, a constituent made of [focus] + [new] or [focus] + [contrast] have to stay in situ, whereas [focus] + [contrast] + [correction] and [focus]

21 I will not deal with the role of movement as needed to satisfy a feature checking relation.

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+ [mirativity] can either stay in situ or be fronted.[22] The case of Sicilian and Sardinian is different as far as new information focus is considered, given that it can be moved to a fronted position (Cruschina 2012; Jones 1993). In these languages [focus] + [new] moves to the focus projection in the left periphery, in a position adjacent to the verb. In case of a fronted information focus in Italian, as the example discussed in footnote 2, the composition is made of [+focus], [+ new] and [+ mirativity]. It is thus the [+ mirativity] interpretation that offers the option of displacement to the focused constituent. If this is not present, the fronted position is not available.

In languages with exhaustive focus, we find different patterns. For example, in Hungarian [focus] + [exhaustivity] moves to the left periphery, whereas in Hausa it can either stay in situ or be fronted, but it has to be marked with the particle *nee/cee* (Hartmann, Zimmermann 2007). Notice that there is also parametrization with respect to *how* focus is realised: depending on the language, it may be realised by means of syntax (as in the case of focus fronting), prosody or morphology, but it may also be a combination of different modules of grammar.

6 Conclusion

In this article I showed that an undifferentiated notion of focus is too general and cannot account for all the properties of this phenomenon. In particular, it is inadequate to capture the syntactic distribution of focused constituents. If we consider focus as a macro-feature that needs to be decomposed into smaller primitive features, several properties can be explained. The sub-features can modulate the macro-feature of focus and they can be combined to determine the different types of focus attested cross-linguistically. These features are parametrized depending on the language: some of them allows fronting of the focused constituent, as in the case of correction and mirativity in Italian, but others do not, as in the case of contrast or new information in Italian.

22 Optionality of movement is still an issue that I will leave open in this work. Moreover, it is not clear how to formally distinguish between features that induce overt focus movement and features that do not, since all of them are equally [+interpretable], that is, must be computed at the LF interface producing distinct interpretive effects. Thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out.

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An Evaluative Head in Romance
The Palermitan Verbal Affix -*vu*

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Abstract In this work, we analyse the behaviour of a verbal suffix in Palermitan – the Romance language spoken in Palermo, Sicily – expressing an evaluative meaning with sentential scope. The suffix is (V)vu, where V is the thematic vowel of the verb. The Palermitan dialect we study here is the one spoken in the urban area, approximately by 250,000 speakers. This suffix is interesting for several reasons. In the first place, an evaluative morpheme with clausal scope is quite unusual in Romance and to our knowledge it has not been reported outside Sicily. In the second place, as we will illustrate later, its use is spreading among the youngest generation, showing that the dialect is productive and the form under scrutiny is adopted by larger segments of the population, even if it does not exist in Italian.

Keywords Speaker. Evaluatives. Verbal morphosyntax. Palermitan. Italian dialects.

1 Introduction

It is well known that a sentence conveys a literal meaning together with information concerning the relationship between the speaker and the context of utterance. This is the case for instance of temporal anchoring, i.e. the location of the events mentioned in the sentence with respect to the temporal location of the speaker.[1] Moreover, besides temporal anchoring, which is an obligatory component, as argued by many scholars, a sentence

1 A preliminary Italian version of this paper appeared in 2012 in *Quaderni dell'ASIT* (see Giorgi, Sorrisi 2012). This version is enlarged and revised and includes further theoretical discussion. We thank the Editors of *Quaderni dell'ASIT*. We also thank the reviewers for their helpful suggestions. Every part of this work has been elaborated together by the

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can convey the speaker's evaluation of the sentential content, its epistemic assessment and several other properties concerning the relation between the sentence and the contextual situation.[2]

In recent years, generative grammar has devoted a lot of attention to the interface between sentence grammar and the context. In particular, scholars working in the cartographic framework have proposed, beginning with the '90s, a syntactic implementation of discourse functions – such as topic and focus (see Rizzi 1997) – and of several linguistic items expressing the speaker's attitude toward the propositional content. This is for instance the case of evaluative, evidential and epistemic adverbials (see Cinque 1999).[3]

Our work follows the cartographic approach. We analyse the behaviour of a verbal suffix in Palermitan – the Romance language spoken in Palermo, Sicily – expressing an evaluative meaning with sentential scope. The suffix is -*vu*, preceded by a thematic vowel. The Palermitan dialect we study here is the one spoken in the urban area, approximately by 150,000 speakers.

This suffix is interesting for several reasons. In the first place, an evaluative morpheme with clausal scope is quite unusual in Romance and to our knowledge it has not been reported outside Sicily. In the second place, as we will illustrate later, its use is spreading among the youngest generation, being adopted by larger segments of the population, showing that the dialect, in spite of the influence of Standard Italian, is very much employed.

2 Evaluative Affixes

An *evaluative* affix conveys the speaker's evaluation of a certain content. In Italian we find nominal affixes, expressing an affective or derogative evaluation of objects, people or situations, such as for instance -*etta* in *casetta* (house-EVAL small), and verbal affixes, expressing an affective or derogative value concerning events, such as for instance -*ucchiare* in *mangiucchiare* (eat-EVAL in small bites).[4]

The morpheme we analyse here belongs to a different class, in that it qualifies the whole sentence, and not only a part of it, as conveying a posi-

two authors. As far as legal requirements are concerned, Alessandra Giorgi takes official responsibility for §§ 1, 3, 5 and 6. Fabrizio Sorrisi for §§ 2 and 4.

2 For a theoretical proposal concerning the syntactic representation of the speaker's spatial and temporal coordinates, see Giorgi 2010.

3 It is impossible to provide an exhaustive discussion of the whole issue and of the related bibliography in this work. We will discuss only the works relevant to our specific topic.

4 For an analysis of these morphemes in Italian, see Gambino 2010 and Grandi, Montermini 2010.

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tive or a negative value. In this respect, therefore, -*vu* has the same functional role as adverbial forms, which, in many languages, Italian included, express a positive or negative evaluation, such as *(s)fortunatamente* ([un] luckily), *inaspettatamente* (unexpectedly), or a locution such as *(per) fortuna che* ([for] luck that). In all these cases the evaluation by the speaker concerns the whole clause.[5]

These adverbs, according to the discussion in Cinque (1999), appear in the left periphery of the clause, above IP, in the same layer where evidentials and epistemics – e.g. *allegedly* and *probably* – may appear:[6]

(1) Cinque (1999), left periphery:...[evaluative [evidential [epistemic...

Evaluative verbal affixes with scope on the entire proposition – sometimes included in the class of items expressing *mirativity* – are found in many languages, even if, as said above, not in Italian. Examples, according to Cinque (1999), can be found in Menomini, an Amerindian language spoken in Wisconsin, in Korean, in Ngiyambaa, an Austronesian language and in Akha, a Tibeto-Burman one.

In Palermitan, beside the morpheme -*vu*, adverbial constructions expressing the meaning of *fortunatamente* (luckily), such as *furtuna ca* (lit.: luck that) and *pi furtuna* (lit.: for luck) can be found, whereas the adverbs ending in -*mente* are generally missing.[7]

The basic contrast we study is illustrated by the following examples:[8]

(2) Accatt**avu** u pisci spada
I bought-EVAL swordfish

(3) Accatt**ai** u pisci spada
I bought swordfish

5 In certain cases these adverbs can refer to constituents and not to the whole clause, as in the following case:

(i) Gianni ha mangiato probabilmente la torta
Gianni ate probably the cake

In (i) the epistemic adverb *probably* refers to the cake. We are not going to consider these cases in this work. For a discussion see Giorgi 2016. It is also important to keep in mind that the notion of *evaluation* is often taken in a much broader sense than the one considered here.

6 For a semantic analysis of evaluative adverbs, see De Vries 2012.

7 We will briefly discuss below the complementary distribution of the evaluative morpheme -*vu* with adverbial locutions such as *fortuna ca* (lit.: luck that). Cf. also Cruschina 2010.

8 In order to assess the extension and the productivity of the morpheme -*vu*, we interviewed three generations of Palermitan native speakers and asked them to provide a grammaticality judgment about some relevant sentences. We interviewed a group of people aged 18-30, another group aged 40-55 and a third one aged 65-80. The total amounts to 12 speakers.

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By means of the sentence in (2), the speaker expresses an evaluation on the event, which just took place, whereas in (3), where the verbal form *buy+PAST* (*accattai*) appears, the speaker only asserts the existence of an event taking place in the past, without providing any evaluation. Note that in example (2), the one with the evaluative morpheme, the event is located in the past as well.

In order to better understand the value expressed by means of sentence (2), let us consider the following minimal pair:

(4) Aeri ci cunt**ai**/cunt**avi** tutti cuose
Yesterday I told-PAST/told-IMPF him everything

(5) Aeri ci cunt**avu** tutti cuose
Yesterday I told-EVAL him everything

The sentence in (4) only asserts the existence of a terminated event located in the past, whereas in (5), besides mentioning the event, the speaker expresses an evaluation on it, such as for instance the following one: "I was able to tell him everything and that was a good thing!". The 'flavour' of the evaluation is determined by the context. As far as example (5) is concerned, we are suggesting a scenario where the evaluation is positive, but we can easily provide examples where the evaluation is a negative one, as in the following case:

(6) *Car**ivu** r'i scali*
I fell-EVAL down the stairs

The example in (6) is most naturally evaluated negatively, as a *default*, on the basis of the consideration that falling down the steps has negative consequences. However, given a suitable context, even this sentence could be associated with a positive value. Consider for instance the following case:

(7) Car**ivu** r'i scali e quindi u cicchinu mi mancò
I fell-EVAL down the steps and hence the sniper missed me

In this case, the fact that the sniper missed me is obviously associated with a positive evaluation of my fall. We will discuss more extensively on these issues about the meaning in § 4 below.

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3 On the Morphological Properties of the Morpheme *-vu*

In this section we will analyse the morpho-syntactic properties of this morpheme, in particular the realisation of the features expressing tense and aspect and of those expressing agreement with the subject.[9]

3.1 The Person Feature

(8) Accatt**avi** > accatt**ai** (Rohlfs 1968)
buy-PAST

We hypothesise, therefore, that the form -*avi* temporally precedes the form -*ai*. Both of them express the first person singular of the simple past. In the following example, we give the complete paradigm of this form:[10]

(9) Accatt**avi**/accatt**ai** (I bought)
Accatt**asti** (you bought)
Accatt**ò** (he/she/it bought)
Accatt**ammu** (we bought)
Accatt**astivu** (you bought)
Accatt**aru** (they bought)

In Palermitan we find also another form, looking very similar to these ones, i.e. the imperfect of the indicative. In (10) we give the imperfect paradigm (-*a* is the thematic vowel):

(10) Accatt**ava** (I bought-IMPF)
Accatt**avi** (you bought-IMPF)
Accatt**ava** (he/she/it bought-IMPF)
Accatt**avamu** (we bought-IMPF)
Accatt**avati** (you bought-IMPF)
Accatt**avanu** (they bought-IMPF)

This form directly derives from the Latin imperfect form, such as the one realised in *laud**abam*** (I praise-IMPF).

The evaluative form *manci**avu*** (I ate-EVAL) is therefore a third alternative. It also exists for other conjugation, beside the first one, as in the following case:[11]

9 In Palermitan, as in general in the Sicilian dialects, the simple past is a perfective past, expressing roughly the same values expressed in the central and Northern Italian varieties by means of the present perfect.

10 On person endings, in particular the second person singular and plural, see Cruschina 2013.

11 On the special values of *fuvu*, see below.

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(11) f**uvu**
(I was-EVAL)

The examples from the first conjugation are however the vast majority.

The ending -*avi* can therefore be analysed as constituted by a morpheme -*v*- marking tense and aspect and a morpheme -*i* marking person. In the form -*ai*, tense and aspect is realised by a 0-morpheme. Analogously, the imperfect ending -*ava* can be analysed as -*v*- followed -*a*. In the evaluative ending -*avu* we find the morpheme -*v*-, which we are going to analyse in the next section, combined with a person ending -*u*. Such a person ending is quite isolated in the Palermitan past paradigms, in that only the evaluative form adopts it to mark the first person singular.

We propose that -*u* is the reduced form of the first person pronoun *eu*, realised as an enclitic on the verb. This proposal is justified by the fact that, as discussed in the literature, this is a widespread process in Sicilian.[12] Moreover, precisely this peculiar ending permits to distinguish the evaluative forms from the past ones, making it possible to specialize this morpheme to express this specific semantic value.

3.2 Tense and Aspect

In this section we discuss the temporal and aspectual values associated with -*vu*. In the previous section we sketched a hypothesis concerning the nature of -*u*; here we investigate what kind of past is realised by means of the morpheme -*v*-. Is this the morpheme -*v*- appearing in the simple past – as in *accatta**v**i* (I bought) – or the one of the imperfect – as in *accatta**v**a* (I bought-IMPF)? From the translations we gave above, it emerges that -*vu* is usually interpreted as a past form, but we can provide more formal and precise arguments to illustrate this point.

Note, as pointed out above, that this form was in a first moment – i.e. in the grandparents' generation – available only for the verbs having the regular first conjugation perfect, i.e. -*(a)vi*, derived from the Latin perfect, as proposed by Rohlfs (1968). Consider the following cases:

(12) *Cunt**avu**, manci**avu***… (I told, I ate)

This is an argument for claiming that -*v*- in -*vu* is actually the morpheme of the perfect and not the one of the imperfect.

The youngest generation however generalises the use of -*vu* also to verbs that are *not* present in the language of the previous generations

12 Cf. Da Tos, Benincà 2010 on enclitic forms in Sicilian.

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and that do not belong to the first conjugation, such as in the following cases:[13]

(13) *Mitt**ivu***, (I put), *ric**ivu*** (I said), *ligg**ivu***,(I read)...

In what follows we show that *-vu* is a perfective past and does not exhibit any of the properties characterizing the imperfect.[14]

As a first consideration, observe that the *-vu* form is in general not anaphoric**.** By *anaphoric* we mean a verbal form that must refer to a previously given moment in time. The imperfect is anaphoric in that it requires a temporal antecedent and cannot be used otherwise, i.e. *out-of-the-blue*. The event expressed by means of the imperfect must have a precise temporal location in the linguistic or extra-linguistic context. Consider for instance the following example:

(14) *(Ieri alle 5) Gianni mangiava un panino
Lit.: (Yesterday at 5) Gianni eat-IMPF a sandwich
'(Yesterday at 5) Gianni was eating a sandwich'

If the temporal locution *ieri alle 5* (yesterday at 5) is not realised, the sentence is out. Generalizing: if a precise temporal location for the event is neither present in the linguistic context, nor retrievable in the discourse, the sentence is ungrammatical. If the speaker uses a past form, the presence of a temporal locution is optional:[15]

(15) (Ieri alle 5) Gianni ha mangiato un panino
Lit.: (Yesterday at 5) Gianni has eaten a sandwich
'(Yesterday at 5) Gianni ate a sandwich'

13 Modal verbs constitute an interesting case. The form *putivu* (I can-EVAL) is not accepted by all speakers. Interestingly, it is usually accepted by very young speakers, i.e. teenagers. It seems therefore a further innovation. The *-vu* forms of the other modals tend to be rejected. For instance, *ruvievu* (I must-EVAL), or *vulievu* (I want-EVAL) are usually considered ungrammatical, even if judgments are not crystal clear. The reason for the decreased acceptability could be due to the simultaneous presence of two different modalities: the evaluative one and the one carried by the verb, which might render the interpretation difficult or odd. The issue deserves further study.

14 Many scholars have studied the properties and distribution of the imperfect in different languages. To mention just some of the works concerning Italian, see Bertinetto 1991; Delfitto, Bertinetto 1995; Giorgi, Pianesi 2001, 2004.

15 As we pointed out above, in order to express a non-perfective past in the Italian examples we use the present perfect form. Such a form is the most widespread one in Central and Northern Italian varieties and the one usually adopted in so-called Standard Italian.

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In this case the locution *yesterday at 5* is not obligatory and the sentence can be used *out of the blue*. Let us consider now Palermitan. When the temporal topic is not realised, the imperfect is not available, as in Italian, whereas both the past and the evaluative form are possible:

(16) Manci**ai** u pisci spada
I eat-PAST swordfish

(17) Manci**avu** u pisci spada
I eat-EVAL swordfish
‘I ate swordfish’

(18) *Manci**ava** u pisci spada
I eat-IMPFswordfish
‘I was eating swordfish’

(19) Aeri ae cincu manci**ai/**manci**avu/**manci**ava** u pisci spada
Yesterday at five I eat-PAST/eat-EVAL/eat-IMPF swordfish

The -*vu* form patterns with the past one, and not with the imperfect.

The second property concerns the continuous interpretation. Simplifying somewhat, when an event is interpreted as continuous, it is conceptualized as an unbounded sequence of sub-events of the same kind. Typically, the imperfect expresses a continuous aspectual value, whereas past forms, such as the simple past or present perfect, do not. For this reason, an event associated with the imperfect morphology can provide the background for another event, whereas, on the contrary, an event with past morphology cannot. In this case the two events can only be located in a sequence with respect to each other. Consider the following examples:

(20) Mentre compravo/*ho comprato il pane mia madre mi aspettava fuori dal negozio
While I buy-IMPF/buy-PAST/bread my mother was waiting for me outside the shop

(21) Mentre accatta**va**/*accatt**ai**/*accatta**vu** u pani me matri m’aspittava fuora ru negozio
While I buy-IMPF buy-PAST/buy-EVAL bread my mother was waiting for me outside the shop
‘While I was buying bread, my mother was waiting for me outside the shop’

The presence of *mentre* (while) forces the interpretation of the adverbial clause as the background, hence the imperfect is available, whereas the past is not. In example (18) the contrast between the imperfect and the simple past is in fact quite sharp. In Palermitan, consistently with what we saw above, the evaluative morpheme patterns with the past and not with imperfect.

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Third, the imperfect can be used to express habituality, whereas the past cannot. Consider the following examples:[16]

(22) Quando ero piccolo giocavo/*ho giocato sempre a pallone nel cortile
When I was a child I always play-IMPF/play-PAST soccer in the courtyard

(23) Quannu era nicu iuca**va**/*iuc**ai**/*iuca**vu** siempre a palluni nu cortile
When I was a child I always play-IMPF/play-PAST/play-EVAL soccer in the courtyard
'When I was a child I always used to play soccer in the courtyard'

Example (20) illustrates the distribution of the imperfect and the past in Italian in habitual contexts. In Palermitan we find the same one and again the evaluative form patterns with the past and not with the imperfect.

Finally, in Italian the imperfect appears in fictional contexts, whereas the past forms are marginal, or marked:[17]

(24) Ho sognato che mangiavo/*ho mangiato un gelato
I dreamt that I eat-IMPF/ eat-PAST an ice cream

(25) Sugnavu ca mi mancia**va**/*manci**ai**/*mancia**vu** un gelato
I dreamt that I was eating an ice cream
'I dreamt I ate an ice cream'

Again, Italian and Palermitan pattern in the same way, and the -*vu* form behaves as a past.

In general therefore, with respect to the temporal interpretation, we can conclude that the difference between -*avu*, and -*ai*/-*avi*, is that the -*vu* form expresses an evaluative affective (i.e. speaker-related) value, whereas the simple past only expresses the temporal (aspectual) value. There is no difference between the two with respect to the temporal interpretation.[18]

We can conclude therefore that the -*v*- appearing in -*vu* is the one appearing in the simple past, even if -*avi* in the competence of the intermediate and youngest generation has been progressively replaced by -*ai*.

With respect to the aspectual properties, the -*vu* form is perfective, in that it is compatible with *achievement predicates* (for instance *to reach the top of the mountain*), which usually are incompatible with imperfective forms. Consider the following examples:

16 The sentences with the past forms are not actually *ungrammatical*, but *odd*, in that the past forces an eventive reading. Since the non-habitual reading is here strongly disfavoured, the sentence is perceived as anomalous.

17 For an extensive discussion of these contexts and for the analysis of the possible readings with indicative forms other than the imperfect, see Giorgi, Pianesi 2001.

18 See however § 6 for a brief discussion of the imminential reading of -*vu*.

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(26) Arriv**ai** in capo a muntagna ae 10
I reach-PAST the top of the mountain at 10

(27) Arriv**avu** in capo a muntagna ae 10
I reach-EVAL the top of the mountain at10

(28) *Arriv**ava** in capo a muntagna ae 10
I reach-IMPF the top of the mountain at10
'I reached the top of the mountain at10'

(29) Sono arrivato/*arrivavo in cima alla montagna alle 10
I reach-PAST/I reach-IMPF the top of the mountain at 10
'I reached the top of the mountain at 10'

Achievements predicates are punctual telic predicates, intrinsically perfective, and cannot be combined with imperfective morphology, with the exception of very marked contexts.[19]

As is possible to see from the examples, in Italian – cf. example (27) – the present perfect is permitted, whereas the imperfect is excluded. The same applies to Palermitan, where we see once more that the *-vu* form patterns with the past and with the imperfect. Hence, aspectually, the evaluative morpheme is perfective.

Finally, note that in Italian a stative predicate can be made perfective, given a suitable context. Consider the following Italian example:

(30) Ho amato Maria per tre anni
I loved Maria for three years

A perfective past can combine with the stative predicate *love Maria*, because of the presence of the temporal locution *per tre anni* (for three years) identifying a temporal span in which the state holds.

In Palermitan we find the same distribution:

(31) Am**ai**/am**avu** a Maria pi tri anni
I love-PAST/love-EVAL for three years
'I loved Maria for three years'

The evaluative morpheme can be combined with statives under the same conditions affecting the past morpheme. Consider also the following example:

19 For an analysis of this issue in Italian, see Bertinetto 1991. It is in principle possible to combine the imperfect morphology with the achievements and in some cases it might be (almost) acceptable, but in general the results are quite odd. We refer the reader to the quoted reference for further discussion.

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(32) Na partita aeri f**ui**/f**uvu** veru bravu
In the game yesterday I be-PAST/be-EVAL really good
‘In yesterday’s game I was really good’

Analogously to the temporal locution we saw above, the phrase *nella partita di ieri* (in yesterday’s game) determines a perfective reading.

Let us add a few word on the form *fuvu*. This is the evaluative form of verb *be* and seems to convey a peculiar meaning: besides expressing the evaluation by the speaker, it also implies that the speaker participated directly to the events mentioned in the clause or at least was present in the background. For instance, in a context in which a goal is scored in a soccer game, the speaker can utter the following sentence:

(33) F**uvu** contentu quanno succiriu
I be-EVAL happy when it happened
‘I was happy when it happened’

By means of this sentence the speaker not only expresses a (positive) evaluation on the event, but also implies that he was an important participant in the situation described, for instance he himself scored the goal. The grammaticalization of these nuances in the Italian varieties with rich(er) morphology is an important topic that has not been much studied yet and that certainly deserves further attention.

4 On Interpretive Issues

The *-vu* form has an ‘affective’ value. As we anticipated in the introduction, the evaluation by the speaker of the event can be either positive or negative and is contextually defined. The *-vi* form, which differs minimally from the evaluative one, on the contrary, simply means that an action took place in the past. Consider the following example:

(34) Incuntr**avu** a Gianni
I meet-EVAL Gianni
‘I met Gianni’

This sentence can have a positive evaluation in the context in which Gianni is a friend of the speaker, whom the speaker met after a long time. The same sentence can have a negative affective value if Gianni is for instance a person to whom the speaker owns money and therefore the speaker would rather not meet.

The interaction with negation constitutes a very interesting point. Consider the negation of the following sentence:

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(35) Unn incuntr**avu** a Gianni
I not met-EVAL Gianni
'I did not meet Gianni'

Example (33) means that the speaker did not meet Gianni and that, in the situation in which the meeting would have a positive affective value – when for instance Gianni is a friend of the speaker – the non-meeting has a negative one. In the opposite situation – owing money to Gianni – on the contrary, the evaluation would be positive.

In other words: the non-negated sentence means "it is a good/bad thing that I met Gianni", whereas the negated one means "it is a good/bad thing that I did *not* met Gianni". Hence, the evaluative marker has scope on negation. Such a reverse scope interpretation is quite anomalous and calls for an explanation.[20] According to Cinque's (1999) proposal, however, evaluative, epistemic and evidential projections are higher then negation, being over IP. So, what needs to be explained is the fact that a certain semantic value, which is usually realised in a high evaluative projection can be expressed by means of a low verbal morpheme. In what follows we propose a solution to this question.

Note that adverbial evaluatives exhibit the same ordering both in Palermitan and in Italian:

(36) Furtuna ca incuntrai a Gianni
Luck that I meet-PAST Gianni
'Luckily I met Gianni'

(37) Furtuna ca unn incuntrai a Gianni
Luck that I not meet-PAST Gianni
'Luckily I didn't meet Gianni'

(38) Fortunatamente ho incontrato Gianni
Luckily I met Gianni

(39) Fortunatamente non ho incontrato Gianni
Luckily I did not meet Gianni

In Palermitan there are no adverbs ending in *-mente*, but only adverbial locutions.[21] Interestingly, in Palermitan the *-vu* morpheme is incompatible

20 Negation c-commands, and consequently should have scope over, a verbal morpheme.

21 On this kind of adverbials in Sicilian see Cruschina 2010. Note that, differently from *-vu*, these adverbials already have a positive – or negative – value. The negative evaluation is expressed in this case by means of *sfurtuna ca* (lit.: unluck that) in Sicilian, and *sfortunatamente* (unluckily) in Italian. Let us also point out that the locution *fortuna che* (lit.: luck that) is also present in Italian.

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with the adverbial locution. In other words, even if it could be deemed reasonable to have the *-vu* morpheme and the adverbial locution together in the same sentence to emphasise the speaker's evaluation, yet it is impossible, as shown by the following example:

(40) *Furtuna ca incuntr**avu** a Gianni
Luck that I meet-EVAL Gianni
'Luckily I met Gianni'

This observation constitutes an argument in favour of the idea that in the morpheme *-vu* is in complementary distribution with the adverbial, and that they lexicalize the same features.[22]

In particular we propose, following Cinque (1999), that *fortunatamente* in Italian occupies the specifier position of an EVAL head. Furthermore, *furtuna ca* (luck that) in Palermitan, and presumably the equivalent *fortuna che* in Italian, occupies the same projection. *Ca*, or *che*, occupies the head position and *furtuna*, or *fortuna*, the specifier. We propose that by means of covert movement the morpheme *-vu* ends up in the head position of the same projection. The only difference is that *fortunatamente* (luckily), has an intrinsically positive value, which does not need to be contextually identified, as opposed to *-vu*.[23]

Finally, *-vu* is incompatible with exclamative forms, such as *mizzica/mizzichina/mii*, as shown in the following example:[24]

(41) Mizzichina quantu manci**ai**/*manci**avu**!
EXCL how much I eat-PAST/eat-EVAL
'Good heavens, how much I ate!'

22 As pointed out by a reviewer, In Italian we can have sentences such as *Gianni deve necessariamente partire* (Gianni must necessarily leave), where *deve* (must) and *necessariamente* (necessarily) coexist. The possibility of such a co-occurrence has still to be explained. It seems to us, however, that the two items – the modal verb and the adverb – do not express exactly the same semantic value, the first being more on the bouletic side, and the second on the deontic one.

23 Alternatively, one could claim that *furtuna ca* and *fortuna che* (luck that) are reduced clauses, equivalent to *è una fortuna che* (lit.: is a luck that), but without copula and determiner. The proposal we are discussing here however presents two advantages: on the one hand it renders the syntactic structure of sentences containing the locution with *che*, identical to the one having a *-mente* adverb, as in the Italian case, on the other it makes it easier to explain the lack of co-occurrence in Palermitan of the locution and the verbal morpheme, since, interpretively, they compete for the same position.

24 *Mizzichina*, and its reduced form *mii*, is an exclamative particle expressing disappointment for one's own misbehavior. *Mizzichina* is impossible in exclamative sentence with a positive value. See for instance the following example, where the expressed value is, in the unmarked case, a positive one:
(i) *Mizzichina chi sii biedda
EXCL that you are beautiful!

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A possible explanation for this incompatibility can be that exclamatives and evaluatives share the same features – or, more reasonably, they share at least a subset of the same features, exclamatives having an evaluative component – hence they cannot be both lexicalized. This point however deserves further studies in Italian varieties and in other languages.

Summarising what we proposed so far, we have shown that the -*vu* form is perfective, as opposed to imperfective. In this, it is analogous therefore to the past form -*avi*/-*ai*, with the only difference that it expresses an evaluation by the speaker. Diachronically, it develops from the Latin first conjugation verbs exhibiting a regular perfect in -*avi*. As a person ending, it exhibits -*u*, which we suggest is the reduced form of the first person pronoun *eu*. Thanks to the presence of the enclitic reduced pronoun -*u*, this form gets specialised as an evaluative one. We can therefore propose the following diachronic derivation (where *a* is the thematic vowel of the first conjugation):

(42) **-(a)vi-u → -(a)v-u*

The morpheme -*vu* lexicalizes an evaluative meaning, which in Italian is expressed by adverbs such as (*s)fortunatamente* ([un]luckily), with the only difference that -*vu* does not specify a positive or negative value, which is contextually determined. Finally, we proposed that even if it is realised as a verbal morpheme, -*vu* is interpreted in a high evaluative projection.

In the next section, we are going to consider the distribution of this form in embedded contexts.

5 Distribution in Embedded Clauses

5.1 Embedding and First Person

The evaluative form -*vu* cannot be embedded, with a single exception we are going to consider in a while. Consider the following sentence:

(43) Gianni ci cuntò a Marco ca aeri accatt**ai**/*accatt**avu** i fichi r'India
Gianni to him-told Marco that yesterday I buy-PAST/buy-EVAL the prickly pears
'Gianni told Mario that yesterday I bought prickly pears'

In this case the main sentence has a third person subject and the embedded one a first person. The evaluative form is not possible. However, when the subject of the main clause is a first person as well, the embedded evaluative becomes possible:

(44) Ci cunt**ai** a Marco ca aeri accatt**ai**/accatt**avu** i fichi r'India.

To him-(I)told Marco that yesterday I buy-PAST/buy-EVAL the prickly pears
'I told Mario that yesterday I bought prickly pears'

Note that the repetition of *-vu* both in the main and in the embedded clause gives rise to very marginal sentences:

(45) ?*Ci cunt**avu** a Marco ca aeri accatt**avu** i fichi r'India.
I tell-EVAL Marco that yesterday I bought-EVAL the prickly pears
'I told Mario that yesterday I bought prickly pears'

The presence of a normal past form in the embedded clause restores grammaticality:

(46) Ci cunt**avu** a Marco ca aeri accatt**ai** i fichi r'India.
I tell-EVAL Marco that yesterday I buy-PAST the prickly pears
'I told Mario that yesterday I bought prickly pears'

This happens even in more complex structures with adjunct clauses:

(47) Assira ci cunt**avu** na storia a Mario e s'addivirtiu, poi quannu c'a cunt**ai**/?*cunt**avu** a Luca, s'annoiò
Yesterday night I tell-EVAL Mario a story and he had fun, then when I told it to Luca, he was bored

Concluding, the evaluative morpheme occurs in the main clause and can appear in the subordinate one only when the main subject is also a first person.

Note that it is not possible to draw the conclusion that this is a root phenomenon, because it is possible to have an embedded *-vu* even when the superordinate first person verb is embedded, as in the following case:

(48) Tutti sannu ca ci cunt**ai** a Marco ca aeri accatt**ai**/accatt**avu** u pisci spada.
Everybody knows that I told Marco that yesterday I buy-PAST/buy-EVAL the swordfish
'Everybody knows that I told Marco that yesterday I bought swordfish'

Example (48) contrasts with the following one:

(49) Tutti sannu ca Gianni ci cuntò a Marco ca aeri accatt**ai**/*accatt**avu** u pisci spada.
Everybody knows that Gianni told Marco that yesterday I buy-PAST/buy-EVAL the swordfish
'Everybody knows that Gianni told Marco that yesterday I bought swordfish'

In example (47), as opposed to (46), the main clause subject is a third person one and the intermediate subject is a first person. This is enough to license the embedded evaluative morpheme.

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Consider furthermore that the relation between the clause with the evaluative morpheme and the clause with a first person subject must be local, as shown by the following example:

(50) M'arricuordu ca Gianni ci cuntò a Marco ca aeri accatt**a**/*accatt**avu** u pisci spada
I remember that Gianni told Marco that yesterday I buy-PAST/buy-EVAL the swordfish
'I remember that Gianni told Marco that yesterday I bought the swordfish'

In this example, the main clause subject is a first person, whereas the intermediate one is a third person. This configuration does not license the evaluative marker in the embedded clause.

We can conclude that the evaluative morpheme only appears in the domain of the *speaker*, namely when the immediately superordinate subject refers to the speaker. When *-vu* is in a main clause, it is still in the domain of the speaker, given the anchor for the main verb is constituted by the utterance event itself, defined by the temporal and spatial coordinates of the speaker.

We propose that this is due to the presence of the reduced first person pronoun *-u*, which must have a local antecedent. In other words, we argue that the reduced form of the first person pronoun is anaphoric, and must have an antecedent in the local domain. Such an antecedent can either be the superordinate subject, or the speaker, whose *hic et nunc* defines the utterance event.[25]

This distribution is also found in the epistemic use of the Italian *credo* (I believe) – cf. Giorgi 2010 – which is licensed by a superordinate first person subject exactly like *-vu*. In the next section we are going to discuss the similarities between those particular usages of *credo* (I believe) and-*vu*, taking into account the distribution of the other kinds of high sentential adverbials as well.

25 This observation fits very well in the more complex picture concerning *temporal anchoring*, as discussed in Giorgi, Pianesi 1997 and Giorgi 2010. According to these authors, in fact, the spatio-temporal coordinates of the speaker must be locally represented in the C-layer both in main and subordinate clauses, in particular with dependences exhibiting an indicative mood. Moreover, in subordinate clauses the spatio-temporal coordinates of the subject of the superordinate clause, i.e. the attitude bearer, are represented in T – cf. Higginbotham 1995. In order to obtain a grammatical sentence with the evaluative morpheme *-vu* the relevant local projection – either T or the leftmost projection in the C-layer – must contain the speaker's coordinates. We are not going to discuss this issue any further here and refer the reader to the mentioned references.

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5.2 A Comparison with Italian

In Italian, evaluative adverbs such as *fortunatamente* (luckily), when appearing in a main clause, express the evaluation by the speaker. Conversely, when embedded they express the evaluation by the subject of the superordinate clause. Consider for instance the following examples (for clarity the reference is given in brackets):

(51) *Fortunatamente* Mario è partito
Luckily Mario left (**speaker**)

(52) Gianni ha detto che *fortunatamente* Mario è partito
Gianni told that luckily Mario left (**Gianni**)

The same distribution can be found with epistemic adverbs such as *probabilmente* (probably):

(53) *Probabilmente* Mario è partito
Probably Mario left (**speaker**)

(54) Gianni ha detto che *probabilmente* Mario è partito
Gianni told that probably Mario left (**Gianni**)

Giorgi (2010) analyses the properties and distribution of the epistemic form *credo* (I believe). *Credo* can appear as a so-called *comment clause* – i.e. a kind of parenthetical – in various positions inside the clause, but differently from *probabilmente* (possibly) cannot refer to the subject of the superordinate. Consider the following examples:

(55) Mario, *credo*, è partito
Mario, I believe, left (**speaker**)

(56) *Gianni ha detto che Mario, *credo*, è partito
Gianni said that Mario, I believe, left **(*Gianni**)

In this respect, it is analogous to *-vu*. Moreover, again similarly to *-vu*, when the subject of the superordinate is a first person, *credo* is more acceptable:

(57) (?)Pensavo di averti detto che Mario, *credo*, è partito ieri
I thought I told you that Mario, I believe, left yesterday (**speaker**)

Giorgi (2010) proposes that *credo* (I believe) is an epistemic head bearing the feature +speaker, due to its first person morphology. For this reason, when the subject of the superordinate refers to the speaker, its acceptability improves.

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Let us consider now the distribution of the adverb *francamente* (frankly). This kind of adverbs can only take the speaker as an antecedent, hence they cannot refer to the subject of the superordinate (cf. Jackendoff 1972):

(58) *Francamente* Mario è un cretino
Frankly Mario is a stupid(**speaker**)

(59) *Gianni crede che *francamente* Mario sia un cretino
Gianni believes that frankly Mario is a stupid **(*speaker)**

The explanation provided for *credo* (I believe) also holds in this case, the only difference being that in the case of *francamente* (frankly) the feature +speaker is not due to first person morphology, as is the case with *credo* and -*vu*, but to its intrinsic meaning.

Even in this case, wen embedded under a first person its acceptability strongly increases:

(60) (?)Credo che *francamente* Mario sia un cretino
I believe that frankly Mario is a stupid (**speaker**)

Concluding, we can say that *credo* (I believe), analogously to -*vu*, is morphologically marked as a first person, hence interpretively it refers to the speaker. *Francamente* (frankly) in Italian is marked as +speaker as well, but as a lexical property. Hence, they cannot be embedded, unless in the scope of +speaker.

6 Imminential Usages

Given the proposal developed above on the nature of -*vu*, we illustrate here a last piece of evidence, even if we only have a tentative explanation for the phenomena in question. We think that it is important to remark that single morphemes can be syncretic with respect to their value, combining some of their properties together.

The morpheme -*vu* can in certain cases express an imminential meaning, combined with the evaluative interpretation. For instance, given a context in which the speaker is hungry and the meal is ready, the speaker says:

(61) U capii, manci**avu**!
Lit.: I understood, I eat-EVAL
'Now, I eat!'

Or, let us imagine a context in which it is late at night and people go on talking forever. The speaker is eager to go home and says:

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(62) M'inn**ivu**!
I go-EVAL
'Now, I go!'

In both cases, the speaker is evaluating the situation as negative for herself and expresses her will of doing something in the immediate future to overcome the negative effects.

As a first consideration, we can say that the imminential value is made possible by the fact that the *-vu* form is a *perfective* form, and not precisely a *past* temporal one, as discussed above in § 3.2.

As argued in Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), perfectivity is usually temporally interpreted as a past, but such a past interpretation – simplifying somehow – is a side-effect of perfectivity. In other words, in principle perfective forms are not intrinsically past ones and for this reason they are also amenable to a future temporal interpretation, which is precisely what happens in this case.[26] This kind of temporal interpretation seems to be specialised in Palermitan for contexts about which the speaker has a negative evaluation and therefore is possible only with *-vu*. The form *manci**ai*** (I eat-PAST) cannot appear in these contexts, because it necessarily expresses a past temporal value.

Furthermore, we argued above that the morpheme *-vu* expresses an attitude of the speaker towards the following content. In these cases, even if the interpretation is not purely evaluative, such a component is still there. Note also that these sentences are realised with an exclamative intonation, which is reminiscent of the Italian exhortative forms, as the following one:

(63) Andiamo!
Go-PRES-1plur (let's go!)

Descriptively, we can say that the Italian present tense is often used *pro-futuro*, and therefore in this case it can very well be used to express an imminential meaning, and the exclamative intonation provides the exhortative part. The Palermitan examples with *-vu* express the Italian meaning we see in (63), plus the evaluative component.

26 We are not going to discuss the issue here, but it is a very well-known fact that in Russian, and in other Slavic languages as well, perfective marked forms can be temporally interpreted as future.

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Von der Macht der Worte und der Gewalttätigkeit des Dichters
Zur Erzeugung virtueller Realität im 18. Jahrhundert

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Abstract This article argues that literature in the 18th century evolved as an instrument to dynamize the relationship between reality and fiction: it creates what in the 20th/21st century is called virtuality, although this has always been associated with digital or other imaging methods. The contribution traces contemporary arguments underlining that language is superior to images in generating the virtual. It further shows how, in the age of Sensibility, mediatic and medical concerns were connected to the new aesthetics of illusion building, and how classical and romantic texts programmatically faced these concerns. They used, each in a different way, the transcendent power of words, in order to shape both the psyche and the body of their readers. The discovery and mastery of the virtual, therefore, was not only the central component for the contemporary educational project, but also served the idea of a health policy.

Keywords Literature as medium. Effect of the real. Illusionary aesthetics. Affective excitement. Education. Sensitivity. Classical and romantic. Enérgeia.

1 Kampf um die Wirklichkeit. Einleitung

In der Inkubationszeit von Klassik und Romantik, zwischen den späten 1770er Jahren und etwa 1790, müssen seltsame Zustände geherrscht haben: Glaubt man den besorgten Äußerungen der Mediziner, Philosophen und Pädagogen in der Spätzeit der Empfindsamkeit, dann pflegt die gesamte Jugend den Müßiggang, ist einem suchtartigen Gebrauch von Lektüre verfallen und fühlt sich durch dieselbe angeregt, «den Mond fleißig anzuschauen, anzureden, anzusingen, und anzubeten». Man sieht die Leser und Leserinnen «bald in Wonneentzücken zerfliessen – bald winseln – bald rasen» (König 1780, 89). Sie deklamieren nachts auf Friedhöfen, entwickeln falsche Vorstellungen von Leben und Liebe, werden triebhaft, hypernervös, asozial und versinken in tiefste Melancholie. Sie sind, schreibt ein anderer Zeitgenosse, «bürgerlich tod, verloren für Aeltern, und Freunde, und

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Vaterland» (Dorsch 1789, 57). Karl Phillip Moritz fasst in seinem zwischen 1785 und 1790 erschienen Romanfragment *Anton Reiser* die grassierenden Auswirkungen des Lesens schließlich wie folgt zusammen: In

> tausend Seelen [kämpfte] die Wahrheit mit dem Blendwerk, der Traum mit der Wirklichkeit, und es blieb unentschieden, welches von beiden obsiegen würde. (Moritz 1997, 415)

Jedes neu in Gebrauch kommende Medium veranlasst fortan vergleichbare diskursive Unruhen: Radio, Kino, Fernsehen, Internet. Sie sind der Erkenntnis geschuldet, dass Medien ihre eigenen Realitäten erzeugen und tief eingreifen in die psychische, physische und gesellschaftliche Existenzweise. Die Medienmoderne beginnt keineswegs erst mit «Aufzeichnungstechniken jenseits der Schrift» (Hartmann 2018, 1), sondern mit eben jener von Moritz beschriebenen Erfahrung – nämlich der, dass die «Durchmischungen realer Realität und fiktionaler Realität» unentwirrbar geworden ist (Luhmann 1996, 148). Diese «Agonie des Realen» (Baudrillard 1978a) wird Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts zu bekämpfen versucht, medizinisch wie poetologisch, und, wie Moritz es darstellt, mit für die Zeitgenossen ungewissem Ausgang.

Doch wie kam es überhaupt zu diesem 'Kampf um die Wirklichkeit'? Im Folgenden möchte ich zeigen, dass und wie im Verlauf des 18. Jahrhunderts Literatur als ein Instrument entwickelt wird, um das Verhältnis zwischen Wirklichkeit und Fiktion zu dynamisieren: und zwar so, dass entsteht, was wir heute 'virtuell' nennen. Ich werde zunächst etwas ausführlicher die rezeptionstheoretische Wende rekonstruieren, die in der Poetik vollzogen wird und die dazu führt, dass ein Bereich zwischen Möglichem und Wirklichem entsteht, den es so vorher nicht gab. In einem zweiten Schritt werde ich ausführen, welche zeichentheoretischen Argumente um 1750 für die 'Macht der Literatur' angeführt werden, um Quasi-Realitäten zu erzeugen. Sodann werde ich den Bogen zurückschlagen zur Empfindsamkeit und knapp zeigen, welche medizinisch-physiologischen Besorgnisse damit gegen Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts verbunden sind. Denn diese stehen, nicht nur zeitlich, am Beginn der literaturästhetischen Programme von Klassik und Romantik.

Mit diesem Ausblick wird der Beitrag enden. Seine Ergebnisse sind Teil eines größeren Forschungsprojekts, das dem Zusammenhang von poetologischen Programmatiken und gezielten Eingriffen in körperliche und psychische Dispositionen im Kontext des Bildungsdenkens des 18. Jahrhunderts nachging (Herrmann 2018). Was hier notwendigerweise recht komprimiert dargestellt ist, lässt sich dort ausführlicher nachlesen, einschließlich aller relevanter Forschungshinweise.

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2 Mehr Energie: Von der Erzeugung belebter Bilder

In der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts dominiert die auf den antiken Dichter Horaz zurückreichende Auffassung, dass Poesie wie die Malerei Bilder erzeugt: *ut pictura poiesis*. Nicht auf der Leinwand allerdings, sondern in der Vorstellung der Lesenden. Spätestens um 1750 werden diese literarischen Bilder zudem beweglich, eine Art Kopfkino: Dichtung soll nun nicht allein täuschend echte, sondern auch 'lebhafte' Bilder in der Vorstellung der Rezipienten und Rezipientinnen erzeugen. Zu diesem Zweck empfiehlt der einflussreiche Schweizer Dichter und Philologe Johann Jakob Breitinger in seiner *Critischen Dichtkunst* (1740) eine Sprache der Leidenschaften, welche «mittelst der Entzückung der Phantasie das Hertz der Leser angreife, und sich davon Meister mache» (Breitinger 1966, 353).

Durch diese überwältigende «herzrührenden Schreibart» (352) sollen laut Breitinger so starke Empfindungen entstehen, dass das Dargestellte im Moment der «poetischen Erzählung» als gegenwärtig erlebt und wahrgenommen wird (389-90). Damit ist der Anfang der modernen Illusionsästhetik markiert. Indem die Literatur etwas erzeugt, was die Lesenden während ihrer Lektüre nicht nur zu sehen scheinen, sondern zugleich auch wirklich empfinden, werden die Grenzen zwischen imaginiertem und tatsächlichem Erleben problematisch.

Denis Diderot beschreibt 1755 diese Grenzverwischung in seiner *Enzyklopädie* als eine Ersetzung der Realität durch den literarisch erzeugten Effekt des Realen. Die Dichtung, heißt es dort, versetzt uns inmitten unter den dargestellten Dinge und lässt eine ganze Szene aus unserer Vorstellung heraus so plastisch entstehen, als fände sie tatsächlich um uns herum statt. Dies kann laut Diderot nur geschehen, weil die Präsenz der Dinge durch das bloß Repräsentierte überlagert und ausgelöscht wird. Die sinnlich erfahrbare Gegenwart wird also durch mentale Konzepte (Ideen) ersetzt – und diese Ideen generieren nun ihre eigenen sinnlichen Wahrnehmungen. Die Hände des Lesers, so Diderot, berühren fiktive Körper, seine Augen betrachten belebte Wesen, seine Ohren hören Stimmen. Das Gelesene materialisiert sich demnach auf dem Weg der Einbildungskraft vor den Sinnesorganen der Rezipienten und wird durch sie hindurch wahrgenommen. Wenn das kein Wahnsinn ist, so Diderot, dann ist es zumindest sehr nahe dran:

> nous sommes transportés au milieu des objets que nous avons à représenter; alors nous voyons une scene entiere se passer dans notre imagination, come si elle étoit hors de nous: elle y est en effet, car tant que dure cette illusion, tous les êtres présens sont anéantis, & nos idées sont réalisées à leur place: ce ne sont que nos idées que nous appercevons, cependant nos mains touchent des corps, nos yeux voyent des êtres animés, nos oreilles etendent des voix. Si cet état n'est pas de la folie, il en est bien voisin. (Diderot 1969, 276)

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In demselben Jahr, 1755, betont auch der deutsche Dichter Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock die Macht der Literatur, die Grenze zwischen Realem und Fiktivem, Erlebtem und bloß Gedachtem zu durchlöchern. In der Vorrede zu seinem bekanntesten Werk, dem *Messias*, schreibt Klopstock unter dem Titel *Die heilige Poesie*:

> Der Dichter bringt mich, durch seine mächtigen Künste dahin, daß ich [...] vergesse, daß es ein Gedicht ist. [...] er bringt uns mit schneller Gewalt dahin, daß wir ausrufen, uns laut freuen; tiefsinnig stehnbleiben, denken, schweigen; oder blaß werden, zittern, weinen. (Klopstock 1981a, 998-999, 1002)

Hier haben wir es mit jemandem zu tun, der ohne sichtbaren Kommunikationspartner und scheinbar ohne Grund vor sich hinredet, schreit, weint, jauchzt und umherspringt. Das gemahnt bereits an die eingangs beschriebene empfindsame Leserschaft. Und es ist in der Tat recht nahe am Wahnsinn. Nicht nur phänotypisch. Denn was der Dichter, was Literatur im Paradigma der Illusionsästhetik auf künstliche Weise im Kopf des Lesers hervorbringt, sind «Hirngespinste». So nämlich bezeichnet Immanuel Kant in seinem *Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes* Vorstellungen, welche an die Stelle der äußeren Wirklichkeit treten. Derartige Ersetzungen sind nicht per se pathologisch, denn sie erfolgen zunächst einmal immer dann, wenn die Sinneswahrnehmungen ausgeschaltet sind – gewöhnlich im Schlaf und im Traum. Im Traum, so Kant, werden die Bilder der Fantasie, da sie nun die Seele dominieren, «so lange sie dauern, für wahrhafte Erfahrungen wirklicher Dinge gehalten werden». Doch «im Wachen, bei guter gesunder Vernunft» (Kant 1977, 893), kann dieser Effekt – derselbe, dem in Moritz’ *Anton Reiser* tausend Seelen erliegen – nur eintreten, wenn die Impulse der Einbildungskraft mit mindestens derselben Stärke und Dauer auf die Seele einwirken wie die Wahrnehmungen der sinnlichen Realität dies tun.

Genau darauf aber zielt nun die neue Ästhetik seit Breitinger ab: Das Vermögen der Einbildungskraft durch starke Seelenreize und Herzensbewegungen derart zu potenzieren, dass ihre Vorstellungen die sinnliche Realität überlagern und auslöschen. Dazu bedarf es einer gewissen Kraft oder *enérgeia* der gewählten Worte, Wortfolgen und Wortverbindungen: Je stärker sie die Seele dominieren, desto plastischer und realer werden die imaginierten Bilder. Der damit verbundene Kraftaufwand lässt den Dichter laut Breitinger zum Gewalttäter werden: Der Dichter «macht es hier eben so, als der, welcher zuschlägt, er greift das Gemüth […] mit wiederholtem Eifer an» (Breitinger 1966, 397).

Hier hat, um einen kleinen digressiven Ausblick anzuschließen, auch die Poetologie der frühen Romantik ihren denkgeschichtlichen Ursprung. Novalis entwirft sie bekanntlich dezidiert als «*Gemütherregungskunst*»

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(Novalis 1968, 639, Nr. 507; Kursivschrift im Original) und für E.T.A. Hoffmann soll sie wie mit «elektrischen Schlägen» arbeiten (Hoffmann 2001, 1117). Das Resultat einer solchen Kunst sieht dann etwa in Hoffmanns Erzählzyklus *Die Serapionsbrüder* (1819-1821) wie folgt aus:

> Serapion erzählte jetzt eine Novelle […]. Alle Gestalten traten mit einer plastischen Ründung, mit einem glühenden Leben hervor, da man, fortgerissen, bestrickt von magischer *Gewalt* wie im *Traum*, daran glauben mußte. (34, meine Hervorhebung)

Möglich wird ein solches Kunstkonzept erstens durch die Aufwertung der Einbildungskraft seit dem späten 17. Jahrhundert und zweitens durch eine Akzentverlagerung vom fertigen Kunstwerk hin zu einem Prozess, in den fortan der Rezipient eingebunden ist. Er vollendet das Werk, indem er es in sich emotional und sinnlich realisiert; indem er, wie Johann Gottfried Herder 1800 in seiner *Kalligone* formuliert, «alle Symbole des Dichters von Worten, Tönen und dem Rhythmus an bis zum Abstraktesten» mit Leben erfüllt (Herder 1998, 959). Dazu aber muss der Dichter, so Herder, «energisch» (959) vorgehen. Anders gesagt: Der Dichter produziert weniger ein Kunstwerk als eine in Worten gespeicherte Energie. Durch sie bringt er den Leser (in einer leicht zwanghaften Koproduktion) dazu, aus den Sprachzeichen innere bewegte Bilder – Seelenfilme sozusagen – zu erzeugen und als Teil seiner Weltwahrnehmung buchstäblich zu realisieren.

Es geht dabei nicht nur um Fragen einer gelungenen Mimesis und um die Macht des Scheins. Das 18. Jahrhundert entdeckt Literatur vielmehr als ein Instrument, um die Beziehung zwischen Wirklichkeit und Möglichkeit zu dynamisieren. Der Leser soll nicht nur vergessen, dass er lediglich ein Gedicht liest, sondern er soll in dieser Vergessenheit reale, psychenformierende Erfahrungen machen – er soll ‘nacherfahren’, was die fiktiven Figuren erleben; er soll sich identifizieren. Und das heißt ja nichts anderes, als dass im Umweg über die Fiktion eine Identität gebildet wird (Vgl. dazu Ricœur 2005). Ein Gedanke, welcher der Literatur ihren zentralen Stellenwert im Bildungsdenken seit Lessing verschafft.

Dynamisiert wird also die Beziehung zwischen Wirklichkeit und Möglichkeit, weil aufgrund der neuen Illusionsästhetik, das Imaginäre ins Reale, ins Selbst und dessen Gefühlswelt umschlägt. Aber auch, und beides hängt miteinander zusammen, weil Literatur nicht mehr als mimetisch, sondern als poietisch, als neue Welten und Dinge hervorbringend, konzipiert wird. Voraus geht dieser Entwicklung im 18. Jahrhundert die philosophische Erkenntnis, dass das Reale vom Imaginären ohnehin nicht zweifelsfrei unterschieden werden kann. Spätestens seit Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’ *Abhandlung Über die Methode*, reale Phänomene von imaginären zu unterscheiden ist klar, dass die Grenze zwischen beiden Dimensionen nicht «streng beweisend» gezogen werden kann und dass es jenseits

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der materiell erfahrbaren Welt weitere potentielle Welten gibt. Leibniz versteht diese Potentialitäten als «Aggregate der wahrhaften Realitäten» (Leibniz 1996, 128). Diese Gedanken setzt Breitinger indirekt fort, wenn er das Vermögen der Dichtung betont, um Dinge und Leiber «aus dem Stande der Möglichkeit in den Stand der Wirklichkeit» zu transferieren. (Breitinger 1966, 56). Dichtung nimmt demnach eine Veränderung des Aggregatzustandes vor; mit dem beschriebenen Maß an Energie oder Kraft sorgt sie dafür, dass das Mögliche ins Wirkliche übertritt – jedenfalls eine gewisse Zeit lang. Denn bliebe der neue Aggregatzustand nicht instabil, wäre der Dichter Gott – oder der Leser tatsächlich wahnsinnig.

Der Transfer des Möglichen ins Wirkliche wird in der Dichtung also nicht vollkommen vollzogen – und er dürfte, selbst wenn das denkbar wäre, aus religiösen und medizinischen Gründen auch nicht vollkommen vollzogen werden. Zwischen dem Möglichen und dem Wirklichen entsteht somit ein dritter Bereich, den die Literatur erzeugt. Klopstock definiert diesen Bereich in seiner Abhandlung *Von der Darstellung* wie folgt:

> Es gibt wirkliche Dinge, und Vorstellungen, die wir uns davon machen. Die Vorstellungen von gewissen Dingen können so lebhaft werden, daß diese uns gegenwärtig, und beinah die Dinge selbst zu sein scheinen. Diese Vorstellungen nenn ich fastwirkliche Dinge. Es gibt also wirkliche Dinge, fastwirkliche, und bloße Vorstellungen. (Klopstock 1981b, 1032)

Mit dem Fastwirklichen aber ist genau jene «graue [...] Zone zwischen Möglichem und Wirklichem» (Flusser 1995, 166-170) entdeckt, in der im 20. Jahrhundert der Medientheoretiker Vilém Flusser das Virtuelle verortet. Flusser zufolge nämlich bedeutet 'virtuell' das, was mit Kraft (*virtus*) «aus dem Möglichen auftaucht und beinahe ins Wirkliche umschlägt» (169). Das Virtuelle ist also nichts anderes als das Resultat des energischen Vorgehens, das Herder vom Dichter verlangt. Flusser (und andere) schreiben die Erzeugung des Virtuellen ausschließlich digitalen Medien und ihren bildgebenden Verfahren zu. Doch schaut man sich den Diskurs des 18. Jahrhunderts an, so passt das Attribut *virtualis* wohl kaum auf etwas so gut wir auf die Gewalt des Dichters und des literarisch erzeugten Realitätseffektes.

Und dieser Realitätseffekt entsteht, geradezu konträr zum Virtualitätsverständnis des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts, in genau dem Moment, in dem Literatur nicht mehr als bildgebendes Verfahren konzipiert ist. Was also kann, im Denken des 18. Jahrhunderts, die Dichtung, das Bilder – seien sie digital oder analog – gerade nicht können?

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3 Worte sagen mehr als tausend Bilder

Ein wesentlicher Grund, warum Literatur derartig kraftvoll ist und Quasi-Realitäten zu erzeugen vermag, besteht für die Zeitgenossen des 18. Jahrhunderts darin, dass sie mit Zeichen arbeitet, die gerade nicht sinnlich und bildhaft, sondern abstrakt, arbiträr und kombinierbar sind und jede Referenz auf die Wirklichkeit verweigern. Das mutet zunächst vielleicht paradox und viel zu postmodern an. Doch so argumentiert nicht etwa der Dekonstruktivist Jacques Derrida, sondern der aufklärerische Philosoph Edmund Burke 1757 in seiner Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Burke weiß freilich sehr genau, welche Widerstände diese Argumentation zu überwinden hat. Sie richtet sich nämlich gegen die bereits erwähnte Auffassung, dass Poesie wie die Malerei Bilder erzeugt und erzeugen soll. Burke stellt fest, dass dies überhaupt nicht möglich ist: «In Wahrheit können Poesie und Redekunst nicht zu so exakten Beschreibungen wie die Malerei kommen» (Burke 1989, 216).

Doch folgt Burke nun keineswegs der gängigen Argumentation, dass die Literatur der Malerei deshalb auch unterlegen sei. Vielmehr zieht er den Schluss, dass die Wortkunst, im Unterschied zur Malerei, überhaupt keine abbildende Kunst ist – und dass genau dies ihr Stärke darstellt. Denn Worte, so Burke, ahmen die Dinge nicht nach, sondern sie ersetzen die Dinge durch «Töne[…], die auf Grund langen Gebrauchs dieselbe Wirkung wie Realitäten haben» (217). Und dieser kleine Satz impliziert dreierlei:

Erstens: Zeichen haben dieselben Wirkungen wie Realitäten. Und sie ersetzen sie! Was für ein Gedanke. Sprache, bedeutet das, ist nicht referentiell, sondern schafft ihre eigene Referantialität. Anders gesagt: Die «referentielle Illusion», wie Roland Barthes das später nennen wird (Barthes 1968, 88), hat Burke bereits durchschaut. (Eine Konsequenz des alten Nominalismusstreits, auf den hier aber nicht weiter eingegangen werden kann; vgl. Herrmann 2018, 43-44).

Zweitens: Es gibt keine irgendwie natürliche Beziehung zwischen den Tönen und dem, was sie bezeichnen. Ihre Relation ist allein durch den langen Gebrauch bestimmt, ergo, sie ist konventionell und arbiträr. Mit diesem Ansatz wird dann der Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure erst über 150 Jahre nach Burke berühmt werden.

Und drittens: Den Lauten, mit denen wir etwas bezeichnen, ist kein Vorstellungsbild zugeordnet von den Dingen, die sie repräsentieren. Das heißt, sie sind bloße Signifikanten (Burke 1989, 211). Auch Blinde, so Burke, können über Farbe und Licht sprechen: Sie kombinieren einfach nur Worte nach bestimmten sprachlichen Regeln. Aber sie haben davon naturgemäß keine visuelle Vorstellung (jedenfalls nicht, wenn sie von Geburt an blind sind). Und sie tun, indem sie so verfahren, «nichts anderes, als was wir jeden Tag in der gewöhnlichen Rede tun» (213). Denn wer etwa Wen-

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dungen benutzt wie «jeden Tag» und «gewöhnliche Rede», argumentiert Burke, hat ja auch «keine Bilder von irgendeiner Sukzession der Zeit oder von Menschen, die miteinander verhandeln» im Gemüt (213). Es sind also allein die Töne selbst und ihr konventioneller Gebrauch, mit dem wir uns verständigen. Und eben das ist es, was uns auch in der Poesie affiziert.

Worauf Burke also lange vor dem *linguistic turn* verweist, ist die Substituierung des Realen durch eine Kette von Signifikanten und ist die Selbstreferenz der Sprache. Burke demonstriert seine These an einem Beispiel aus John Miltons Epos *Paradise Lost*, in dem die Wanderung der gefallenen Engel durch ihre schrecklichen Wohnstätten beschrieben wird. Die letzten beiden von ihm zitierten Verse lauten: «Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens and shades of death, | A universe of death» (219).

Burke erläutert nun die Wirkung der Zeichen-Kombination und der Wortfolge: Zunächst scheint lediglich eine Landschaft dargestellt zu werden, «Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens and shades». Trotzdem, so Burke, entsteht vor dem inneren Auge kein 'bestimmtes' Gemälde, zeigen sich keine konkreten Felsen, Grotten, Höhlen, Seen, Sümpfe, Moore und Schatten, sondern es entsteht eine eher vage Stimmung des Wüsten und des Wilden. Die ästhetische Kraft entbindet sich laut Burke nun einerseits aufgrund der Denotationen, Konnotationen und Assoziationen, die die Wörter transportieren oder evozieren, also auf der lexikalisch-semantischen Ebene; andererseits resultiert sie aber aus der Komposition der Silbenklänge, das heißt aus der Reihung der 'o', 'aei' und 'e' Töne: «Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens and shades».

Aber das ist noch nicht alles. Durch das Hinzufügen zwei weiterer Wörter (mehr *enérgeia*!) wird das solcherart generierte diffuse Gefühl noch weiter gesteigert und ins Erhabene gewendet, wie Burke auch mit typographischen Mitteln verdeutlicht: «Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens and shades […] of *death*» (219). Und schließlich erfolgt eine weitere sprachliche Steigerung, die eine letztlich unvorstellbare quantitative Ausweitung des Erhabenen erzeugt: «A universe of death».

Der Konkretisierungen bedarf es hier nicht. Im Gegenteil: Gerade dort, wo Wörter die referentielle Illusion verweigern, erzeugen sie ihre eigene Wirklichkeit. Zwar bleiben sie einzeln unter Umständen völlig wirkungslos, so Burke; doch in ihrer Kombination können sie in «kraftvoller Weise Leidenschaften» entfachen, vermögen sie

> einen tiefen Eindruck zu machen und im Gemüt gleichsam Wurzel zu schlagen, während die Idee des realen Dinges schnell vorüber geht, ja vielleicht manchem Menschen überhaupt nicht in irgendeiner Gestalt real begegnet. (218)

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Durch die Kombination der Zeichen also sind

> Redekunst und Poesie [...] noch weit besser geeignet [,] lebhafte Eindrücke hervorzurufen, als irgendwelche andere Künste und sogar – in sehr vielen Fällen – als die Natur selbst. (217)

Dichtung ist somit nicht nur nicht der Malerei nachgeordnet, sondern überbietet auch noch die Natur. Zusammenfassend kann man also sagen, dass Poesie ein «Reales ohne Ursprung» zu generieren vermag, und damit das, was Jean Baudrillard in einem anderen Jahrhundert ein Simulakrum nennen wird (Baudrillard 1978b). Darüber hinaus ist dieses Reale besonders wirkungsmächtig, weil es gerade nicht mit klaren Bildern an den Verstand appelliert, sondern kraftvolle, aber unbestimmte Vorstellungen evoziert: Schemen oder, wie es dann bei den Romantikern heißen wird, ‘Umrisse’ nur, die jeder Leser mit eigenen Vorstellungsfragmenten und unbewussten ‘Begierden’ füllen kann. Dies und die von Burke vorgeführte Tatsache, dass Wortfolgen beim Lesen sukzessiv wahrgenommen werden, dass also die Erwartungen des Lesers permanent neu angereizt und seine Vorstellungen dadurch gesteuert werden, verstrickt den Rezipienten mit seinem ganzen Selbst in den Text. Der Dichter hat deshalb, wie Klopstock 1779 schreibt, «sozusagen zwei Kräfte mehr» als sie der Maler hat, um «die Darstellung bis zur Täuschung lebhaft zu machen. Wer hat jemals bei einem Gemälde geweint?» (Klopstock 1981, 163).

Man sollte allerdings genau wissen, mit welchen Mitteln man sein Publikum wann und zu welchem Zweck zum Weinen bringt. Der Dichter, schreibt Friedrich Schiller Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, muss berechnen, «unter welchen [Bedingungen] eine bestimmte Rührung des Gemüts *notwendig* erfolgen muß» (Schiller 1992a, 1019-1020; Kursivschrift im Original). Schiller hat das nicht von Burke, sondern von Klopstock, der nämlich versucht, in Erweiterung des Burkschen Ansatzes, die emotive und appellative Funktion der sprachlichen Zeichen möglichst genau zu erkunden. Klopstock schlägt hierzu eine empirische Rezeptionsforschung vor: Man soll den Dichter «vorlesen und die Eindrücke sehn» (Klopstock 1981c, 918), um so «eine genaue Kenntnis *aller* Bestimmungen» der Zeichen, «die sie haben, und durch gewisse neue Stellungen haben können, zu erlangen» (Klopstock 1981d, 995; Kursivschrift im Original).

Klopstocks Zeichentheorie – seine Semiotik – ist also an die akustische Form der Dichtung gebunden. Im Vordergrund seiner Überlegungen stehen daher die Klangeigenschaften der poetischen Sprache. Dazu gehören etwa Rhythmus und Silbenmaß, phonetischer Wohl- und Übelklang der Signifikanten. All dies bildet den ‘Mitausdruck’ – man könnte auch sagenì die Konnotation, denn es modifiziert die Empfindungen und Vorstellungen, welche der Wortsinn denotiert.

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> Der Wohlklang, und noch mehr das bedeutende Silbenmaß, haben viel Ausdruck; […]. Der Dichter kann diejenigen Empfindungen, für welche die Sprache keine Worte hat […] durch die Stärke und die Stellung der völlig ausgedrückten ähnlichen, mit ausdrücken. […] Überhaupt wandelt das Wortlose in einem guten Gedicht umher, wie in Homers Schlachten die nur von wenigen gesehnen Götter. (Klopstock 1981b, 1036-7)

Statt etwa eine Landschaft, und sei es eine Landschaft des Todes, nur als wild und öd wahrzunehmen, wird sie durch die bewusst komponierte Tonalität der Sprache erhaben – so hat es Burke vorgeführt. An die Seite der semantischen treten also aurale Informationen (zum Begriff des Auralen vgl. Herrmann 2015). Um letztere gezielt einzusetzen, sortiert Klopstock unter anderem Worte und Wortverbindungen nach metrischen Mustern und ordnet diesen jeweils Zeit- und Stimmungsqualitäten zu: Langsames, Unruhiges, Sanftes, Starkes, Munteres, Ernstvolles usw. Wie das im Einzelnen geschieht und wie überzeugend das ist, muss hier nicht interessieren. Wichtig ist, dass Aurale und semantische Informationen bestmöglich korrespondieren und sich gegenseitig potenzieren sollen. Klopstock entwirft so eine wohl kalkulierte Hörkunst. Sie bildet eine Technik, die Seele gezielt in möglichst lebhafte «*Aktion*» (Klopstock 1981d, 993; Kursivschrift im Original) zu versetzen und sie alle «Stufen der starken und stärkern Empfindung hinaufsteigen» zu lassen (Klopstock 1981a, 1000). Dann, kann das Fastwirkliche entstehen.

Indem Literatur als in höchstem Maße kraftvoll – *virtualis* – konzipie rt ist, beansprucht sie die Vorrangstellung im Streit der Künste. Doch weil Literatur in höchstem Maße kraftvoll – *virtualis* – ist, erweist sie sich auch als bedrohlich für das Individuum und die Gesellschaft. Es erfordert nämlich, mit Burke gesagt,

> ein gehöriges Maß von gesundem Menschenverstand und Erfahrung, um gegen die Kraft [der poetischen] Sprache gefeit zu sein. (Burke 1989, 209)

Wie die besorgten Diskussionen um die Lesesucht der späten Empfindsamkeit zeigen, scheint es an derartiger Widerstandsfähigkeit aber gerade zu mangeln. Insbesondere Frauen und junge Männer, so schreibt der Hallenser Philosoph Johann August Eberhard 1786 in seiner Abhandlung *Ueber den Werth der Empfindsamkeit besonders in Rücksicht auf die Romane*, erkennen die «Gewaltthätigkeit des Dichters» nicht, «womit er auf seine Hirngespinste die Farben der Existenz trägt» (Eberhard 1786, 8-9). Und das ist umso gefährlicher, weil «Empfindnisse aus Phantasmen gerade die lebhaftesten und allgewaltigsten sind» (Eberhard 1786, 13). Nichts scheint so real empfunden und zugleich so rauschhaft nacherlebt zu werden wie ein Roman. Es entstehen jene tausende pathologischen Leser, von denen Karl Phillip Moritz schreibt,

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dass Wahrheit und Täuschung nicht auseinanderhalten können. Diese ‘Schwärmer’, wie sie im zeitgenössischen Sprachgebrauch heißen, sind jenen «*vier und zwanzig kleinen Figuren*, die wir *Buchstaben* nennen» (Kursivschrift im Original) ausgeliefert, schreibt Karl Phillip Moritz. Sie agieren «bestrickt von magischer Gewalt wie im Traum» (Moritz 1997, 22). Das ist dem Wahnsinn inzwischen mehr als nur nahe.

Aber warum und wie führt das nun zu Klassik und Romantik?

4 Literarische Eingriffe ins Gehirn. Abschließende Bemerkungen

Phänomene wie die Schwärmerei definiert Kant in seinem *Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes* deutlich als Verrückung: «Der Verrückte ist also ein Träumer im Wachen.» Die Verrückung tritt ein, so Kant, wenn «gewisse Chimären […] gleichsam eine oder andere Organe des Gehirns verletzt hätten» (Kant 1977, 893) und nun also, muss man anfügen, die Verarbeitung der Primärimpulse der sinnlichen Wahrnehmungen dauerhaft stören. Die Gewalttätigkeit des Dichters hat also physiologische Folgen. Da im 18. Jahrhundert von einer Wechselwirkung zwischen Körper und Seele ausgegangen wird, führt das Einschlagen auf das Gemüt am Ende zu zerebralen und neurologischen Schäden. Denn für die Zeitgenossen ist klar, dass

> zwischen Seele und Körper eine so enge Verknüpfung Statt findet, daß in jener auch keine einzige Veränderung vorgehen kann, welche nicht auf die Gehirnfibern, und durch diese auf das ganze Nervensystem zurückwürkte. (Eberhard 1786, 12-13)

Dies ist umso bedenklicher, als man durchaus überzeugt davon ist, dass sich derart künstlich modifizierte Physiologien auf die nächste Generation vererben können. Das ist gut, solange dies der Verbesserung von Seele, Kopf, Herz und Gattung dient, solange dies also dem herrschenden Perfektibilitäts- und Bildungsdenken entspricht. Es ist jedoch negativ, wenn das Gegenteil zu befürchten steht. Daher fordert beispielsweise Johann Gottfried Herder 1778 dazu auf, Hässlichkeit in der Kunst zu vermeiden, da «sie selbst lesend uns Nervenbau und Gehirn zerreiße» und noch «Geschlechterhinab Unheil» stiftet (Herder 1994, 274). Manche empfehlen zur Heilung des Kopfes den Einsatz des Trepans, des Schädelbohrers. Doch man kann auch mit Literatur heilen, was Literatur bewirkt hat. Es muss nur die richtige Lektüre sein. Lesediäten und Lesekanones zielen auf eine solche ‘Schwärmerkur’, aber auch das poetologische Programm der neu entstehenden Klassik.

Wenn beispielsweise Friedrich Schiller Anfang der neunziger Jahre eine allzu «energische […] Herzenssprache» (Schiller 1992b, 988) ablehnt und

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das Idealschöne als notwendigen Teil einer «Erziehung zur Gesundheit» (Schiller 1992c, 634) betrachtet, ordnet sich die Ästhetik der Weimarer Klassik in die medizinischen Diskurse um die Pathologien des literarischen Virtuellen ein (Herrmann 2018, 479-91). Denn Schillers ästhetisches Konzept folgt dem Ansatz derjenigen Ärzte, die voraussetzen, dass die Erregung der Leidenschaften die Lebenskraft ebenso erschöpft wie eine allzu einseitige Verausgabung in der Studierstube. So kann man es etwa in Christoph Wilhelm Hufelands *Makrobiotik* lesen (Hufeland 1797). Schiller sieht daher das Ziel der Kunst darin, sowohl die Leidenschaften dietätisch still zu stellen als auch die ratio durch das Gefühl des Schönen sinnlich zu erweitern. Auf diese Weise soll ein harmonischer Ausgleich der Seelenkräfte erreicht und eine «ästhetische Stimmung des Gemüts [...] als *Null*» erzeugt werden (Schiller 1992c, 638; Kursivschrift im Original) – ein Antidot gegen jegliche Schwärmerei.

Auch Schiller erkennt in der Dichtung eine «wahrhaft magische Gewalt», die den Rezipienten an sich zieht (Schiller 1992a, 1037), nur transferiert er diese 'Gewalt der Poesie' ins Ästhetisch-Moralische und wertet durch eine derartige Indienstnahme des Virtuellen Literatur zu einem potenten Instrument der Seelenformung um, das zu einer Vervollkommnung des Menschen im Geist der Weimarer Klassik (und mittels ihrer ästhetischen Ausrichtung) führen soll.

Schiller knüpft damit an die schon ältere Vorstellung an, dass Ästhetik eine Wissenschaft sei, «daraus man eben so wol lernen kann, eine Anakreontische Ode zu machen, als Gemüthskrankheiten zu curiren» (Bolten 1751, A 8). Doch geht es hier nicht nur um eine psychische Kur, sondern auch um eine biopolitische Korrektur an den überreizten, nervösen Körpern der empfindsamen Schwärmer, von denen es heißt: «ein Rosenblatt auf ihrem schlaflosen Lager macht ihnen Schmerz, ein heftiger Wind bringt sie in Konvulsionen» (Dorsch 1789, 56).

Das sind ganz und gar unklassische Körper – man denke an das von Johann Joachim Winckelmann gezeichnete Ideal der sportlich gestählten griechischen Körper und an seine Interpretation der Laokoon-Gruppe, deren immense Qualen sich «mit keiner Wuth in dem Gesichte und in der gantzen Stellung» äußern. Winckelmann folgert daraus:

> So wie die Tiefe des Meeres allezeit ruhig bleibt, die Oberfläche mag noch so wüten, ebenso zeigt der Ausdruck in den Figuren der Griechen bei allen Leidenschaften eine große und gesetzte Seele. (Winckelmann 2002, 43)

Dem daraus abgeleiteten Ideal von «edle[r] Einfalt, stille[r] Größe» (45) entsprechen die Schwärmer ganz offenkundig nicht – ihre von Krämpfen, Vapeurs und Ohnmachten geschüttelten Körpern manifestieren vielmehr das genaue Gegenteil, wie etwa auch Johann August Eberhard in seiner Schrift *Über den Werth der Empfindsamkeit* 1786 unmissverständlich feststellt:

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> Wenn ein solches unnatürliches Geschöpf mit seiner Empfindsamkeit unter den Griechen und Römern erschienen wäre: so würden die geistreichen Griechen es verspottet, und die stoischen Römer es verachtet haben. (Eberhard 1786, 120-1)

Ein literarisches Stil- und Formideal wie das der Weimarer Klassik, das den Winckelmannschen Maßgaben von edler Einfalt dezidiert verpflichtet ist, richtet sich also nicht nur gegen die Gemüter, sondern auch gegen die Körper der Schwärmer, entsteht sozusagen in genauer Opposition dazu; und umgekehrt enthält das Konzept von der 'ästhetischen Erziehung zur Gesundheit' aufgrund der zeitgenössisch vorausgesetzten engen Verknüpe fung von Seele und Körper klare biopolitische Implikationen.

Aber nicht nur die Poetik der Weimarer Klassik, auch die der frühen Romantik entsteht aus der Idee heraus, durch eine gemütslenkende "*Worttechnik*" gezielt auf die «innern Verhältnisse [...] und Einrichtungen unsers Körpers» (Novalis 1960, 98; Kursivschrift im Original) einzuwirken – freilich mit einem ganz anderen Ziel. Nicht zuletzt deshalb, weil hier eine andere medizinische Schule der Erregungstheorie favorisiert wird. So notiert der durch Hufelands (und Goethes) Gegner Andreas Röschlaub und John Brown inspirierte Novalis: «*Kunst zu leben – gegen die Makrobiotik*» (Novalis 1965, 642; Kursivschrift im Original). Deutlicher kann die Opposition zur medizinischen Basis von Schillers Idealismus kaum formuliert werden.

In die gleiche Kerbe schlagen Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder und Ludwig Tieck, wenn sie schreiben, dass die beschwörende Abwehr der «Geister der Leidenschaft» die Empfindungsfähigkeit betäubt und «uns zu lebendigen Leichnamen» macht. Allein der Wechsel unterschiedlicher Reize und Erregungen erhält demnach die «wahre Lebenskraft» (Wackenroder, Tieck 1973, 96). Folglich kann die Poesie nur, wenn der Dichter mit «Schmerz und Kitzel» waltet, «die große Kunst der Construktion der transcendentalen Gesundheit» (Novalis 1965, 535). Auch die Frühromantiker verstehen sich also als Ärzte, gehen jedoch andere Wege als die Weimarer Klassiker und entwickeln ein anderes ästhetisches Konzept. So erklären sich etwa aus ihrer spezifischen und von Schiller abweichenden Erregungstheorie heraus, das kann aber an dieser Stelle nicht weiter erläutert werden, auch die frühromantischen Konzepte von Ironie, Buffonerie und dem Antithetischen sowie vom Wunderbaren (Herrmann 2018, 396-413).

Insbesondere Novalis versteht Dichtung als Mittel des konkreten physikalischen Eingriffs in die Lebenskräfte und ihrer Steigerung. Wie Schiller geht er davon aus, dass es einen *influxus mentis* gibt und Gedanken den Körper physisch beeinflussen können (Novalis 1968, 637). Inspiriert durch seine naturphilosophischen Studien, aber etwa auch durch zeitgenössische Experimente zur Neubildung von Organen beim Polypen, kommt Novalis

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zu der Überzeugung, dass man die Macht der Gedanken nur entsprechend steigern müsste, um «uns einen Körper zu geben, welchen wir wollen» (Novalis 1965, 584). Dazu müsste dann aber die Einbildungskraft gerade nicht reduziert, sondern noch weiter gesteigert werden als es bereits beim Schwärmer der Fall ist. Novalis vertritt nämlich die Idee, dass der Körper als «gemeinschaftliche Centralwirckung unsrer Sinne» zu verstehen ist (584, Nr. 248); wenn also die Einbildungskraft die Wahrnehmung der Sinne vollkommen beherrscht beziehungsweise überlagert, dann sollte sie deren gemeinschaftliche Zentralwirkung steuern können – und folglich auch den Körper zu verändern, ihn willentlich um oder neu zu bilden vermögen.

Um aber die Einbildungskraft zu steigern, bedarf es aber der richtigen literarischen ‘Worttechnik’, einer eben, die der kalmierenden, ausgleichenden Wirkungsintention der Klassizisten vollkommen entgegengesetzt ist. Anders gesagt: Novalis’ ästhetisches Programm zielt darauf, die pathologischen Symptome der Schwärmerei noch zu verstärken, um die Wahrnehmung der Sinnesorgane dauerhaft auszuschalten und so eine völlig virtuelle Welt zu erzeugen, «ohne Bedingung eines äußern Reitzes entstanden» (Novalis 1965, 562). Dass nach zeitgenössischem Wissensstand ein fundamentaler Umbau des Gehirns damit verbunden ist, war Novalis bekannt – und für ihn durchaus nicht ungewollt. Denn er verband damit die Hoffnung auf eine dauerhafte Erweiterung der geistigen Kräfte. In der von Novalis anvisierten Virtualität sollte es dem Menschen jedenfalls künftig gelingen, sich in der

> Gestalt *zu produciren*, die er verlangt – und im eigentlichsten Sinn in *Seiner* Welt leben zu können. Dann wird er […] sehn[,] hören – und fühlen – was, wie und in welcher Verbindung er will. (583; Kursivschrift im Original)

Lässt sich die Weimarer Klassik als ästhetische Schwärmerkur verstehen, so sahen sich die frühen Romantiker also als transzendentale Ärzte. So unterschiedlich die Programmatiken sein mögen: In beiden Fällen geht es darum, mittels literarischer Texte einen Raum des Virtuellen zu erzeugen und Psychen wie Körper zu modifizieren. Der ‘Kampf um die Wirklichkeit’ offenbart sich so auch als einer um die ‘richtige’ Formung des Menschen; die Entdeckung und Beherrschung des literarischen Virtuellen erweist sich als zentraler Bestandteil eines umfassenden, auch gesundheitspolitisch motivierten, Bildungsvorhabens.

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F. Scott Fitzgerald and Willa Cather, via Edith Wharton

The New New Woman: Intertextual Echoes

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Abstract In *The Beautiful and Damned* several intertextual references to Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark* and to Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country* occur: this essay explores those regarding the New Woman, the flapper. Harshly criticised by the two women writers, she is more nuanced in Fitzgerald's second novel.

Keywords Intertextuality. The Beautiful and Damned. The Song of the Lark. The Custom of the Country. The New New Woman.

Various critical studies have demonstrated the influence that two powerful and successful women writers, Willa Cather[1] and Edith Wharton,[2]

1 In a 1925 letter to Cather, Fitzgerald apologised for a sentence in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) that is "parallel and almost similar" to one she had written in *A Lost Lady* (1923). We know from Fitzgerald's letters, that he very much liked "Paul's Case" (1905), *My Ántonia* (1918) and *A Lost Lady*. In another letter (1921) he ranked Cather with Mencken, Cabell, Wharton, Drieser [*sic*], Hergeshiemer, and Charles Norris as "the literary people of any pretensions" of his times. In a later one (1937), he wistfully wrote, "I feel as if I were a contemporary of Richard Harding Davis and Eleanor Glynn and yet my seniors by twenty years – Willa Cather, Ferber et al. seem to live zestfully in the present" (Duggan 1980, 79, 155-56, 79, 472). For some studies that centre on Fitzgerald's works in relation to Cather's, see: Bruccoli, Matthew (1978). "'An Instance of Apparent Plagiarism': F. Scott Fitzgerald, Willa Cather, and the first Gatsby Manuscript". *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 171-8; Quirk, Tom (1982). "Fitzgerald and Cather: *The Great Gatsby*". *American Literature*, 54(4): 576-91; Bell, Ian F. (1995). "Newness of Beginning. The Violent Phantasies of Willa Cather and F. Scott Fitzgerald". Versluys, Kristiaan (ed.) (1995). *The Insular Dream. Obsession and Resistance*. Amsterdam: VU; Kundu, Gautam (1998). "Inadvertent Echoes or 'An Instance of Apparent Plagiarism'? Cather's *My Ántonia, A Lost Lady*, and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*". *Etudes Anglaises*, 51(3), 325-7; Seguin, Robert (2000). "Ressentiment and the Social Poetics of *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald Reads Cather". *Modern Fiction Studies*, 46(4), 917-40; Brodwin, Stanley (2003). "F. Scott Fitzgerald and Willa Cather: a New Study". Bryer, Prigozy, Stern 2003, 173-89.

2 In a 1924 letter, Fitzgerald wrote of Wharton, "she's a very distinguished grande dame who fought the good fight with bronze age weapons when there were very few people in the line at all" (Bruccoli, Duggan 1980, 141). For some studies that centre on Fitzgerald's

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exercised on F. Scott Fitzgerald. He attentively read their works as they provided him with many suggestions. Although in a half-serious article he once publicly acknowledged that "I am a professed literary thief, hot after the best methods of every writer in my generation" (Bruccoli, Bryer 1971, 163), his talent allowed him to detect the novelty and sharpness that distinguish even the minor characters and events in the fiction of his two older colleagues, but, at the same time, to make them his own in a variety of subtle, different ways.

Pointing out the debt that, in my opinion, Fitzgerald owed to Cather's *The Song of the Lark* – a debt regarding both *The Beautiful and Damned* and, in a couple of significant details, *The Great Gatsby* – I will also suggest how, with regard to *The Song of the Lark*, Wharton,[3] in turn, may have been an inspiration for Cather (O'Brian 1987, 280, 301) and possibly, through her, for Fitzgerald. These instances of intertextuality[4] have previously gone unnoticed.

After the commercial success and, despite some dissenting voices, the critical triumph of his 1920 debut novel, *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald was terrified of not being able to pull off a similar feat – in esteem and in financial returns.[5] His second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, serialised in 1921-22, was published in book form in 1922. It is curious that for a writer so attentive to his immediate contemporaneity, its action not only spans eight years (from 1913 to 1921) but, thanks to the many flashbacks, it also goes as far back as at least 1888,[6] thus comprising over thirty years. Indeed, at the very outset, Fitzgerald very much emphasises the year in which the action begins: "In 1913, when Anthony Patch was twenty-five…" (Fitzgerald 1922, 3).[7] Intrigued by this highlighting, I speculate that he may have chosen the year 1913 in order to disguise, however naively, his debt to Cather's second novel of the Prairie Trilogy by preceding it (as far as fictional time is concerned) by two years.

works in relation to Wharton's, see: Duggan 1972, 85-7; Peterman 1977, 26-35; Killoran 1990, 223-4; Yang 2004, 67-72; Giorcelli 2002, 151-78.

3 As Cather acknowledged in her book of criticism, "Henry James and Mrs. Wharton were our most interesting novelists, and most of the younger writers followed their manner" (1953, 93).

4 Incidentally, in *The Beautiful and Damned* (437) Fitzgerald mentions an actual work by Wharton: *Ethan Frome*.

5 While *The Beautiful and Damned* was being serialized, Fitzgerald wrote to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, in these terms: "My deadly fear now is [...] not the critics but the public. Will they buy – will you and the bookstores be stuck with forty thousand copies on your hands?" (Mizener 1951, 138).

6 This is Anthony Patch's year of birth. In the novel there are also references to Anthony's grandfather, Adam.

7 All references from *The Beautiful and Damned* will henceforth appear parenthetically in the main text by the initials, *BD*, followed by page numbers.

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The Song of the Lark was, in fact, published in 1915. Its narrative roughly encompasses, in a traditionally linear way, twenty-five years (from 1884-85 to 1909).[8] In it, in an apparently marginal, but, in effect, crucial episode, Cather depicts a type of femininity on which from 1920, when his first collection of short stories[9] came out, Fitzgerald based his claim to fame, having determined to turn it into his trademark: the new New Woman, the flapper.

The flapper was a development of the New Woman of the 1880s and, possibly, an extension of the Gibson girl of the 1890s. The New Woman, a definition popularised by Henry James (Smith-Rosenberg 1985, 176), had generally been a cultivated, independent, politically and socially progressive young career woman (often from the upper classes), who, with the new access to a University education and the new legal rights to own property – although with yet no right to vote –, used her iconoclastic frankness[10] and utter freedom to exercise her choices even when it came to marital and sexual partners. The Gibson girl, instead, had been beautiful, flirtatious, athletic, pleasure-seeking and defiant of bourgeois norms, but less vocal and belligerent about her dislikes: she did not openly challenge prescribed feminine roles. She kept herself dainty, charming, and aloof, even if accessible, and "promised fertility if not maternal devotion" (Patterson 1995, 73). Although, by and large, society disapproved of the New Woman, fearing, with the crumbling of the separate sphere ideology and the pursuit of intellectual activities, both the collapse of western civilisation – especially if she sought divorce[11] – and a perilous shrinking in birth-rates, it was more lenient towards the Gibson girl, who had been legitimised at a period of social and political turmoil. To be sure, they were two different, but contiguous, modes of declining the new presence of woman in society.

When the flapper appeared on the British and American social scene in the late 1900s (around 1908-1910), she was smart, vibrant and unconventional. Theatrical in her poses, gestures, and pronouncements, she did not look on marriage and motherhood as the centres of a woman's life. As has been argued, "[a]n emerging new morality was already evident in the 1910s. […] The emphasis on women's sexuality coincided with the trend of

8 Thea is eleven when the novel begins, which means that she was born in 1873-4; 1909 is the only date that appears in the first edition of the novel.

9 Entitled *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920).

10 See Ammons 1992, 121-60 and Tichi 1988, 589-606.

11 In 1909, Reno, in Nevada, was the first American city to grant divorce. At the beginning of *The Custom of the Country*, with the action set in 1900, Ralph Marvell's mother says to Undine: "In New York […] a divorced woman is still – thank heaven! – at a decided disadvantage." To which Undine answers, "in Apex, if a girl marries a man who don't [sic] come up to what she expected, people consider it's to her credit to want to change" (95-6).

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women seeking more freedom in their social life” (Dumenil 1995, 131). It was only after the end of World War 1, in the ’20s, however, that the flapper became socially prominent and was often portrayed in high literature.[12] Therefore, by presenting in 1915 this type of young woman – someone in many ways in contrast to *The Song of the Lark*’s central character, Thea Kronborg – Willa Cather anticipated a key literary-cultural shift.

My speculation becomes more complex at this point because, according to Cather’s novel’s narrated time, the episode to which I am referring – the encounter and marriage of Fred Ottenburg with Edith Beers – must have taken place in the late 1880’s (Cather 2012, 736).[13] In those years the New Woman had already made her appearance, but Edith does not seem to possess all of her characteristics (she is not University educated, does not have a career, and is not politically progressive, for instance). Since in the late 1880s neither the Gibson girl nor the flapper were yet on the scene, I wonder whether, when drawing this character, Cather may not have been prompted by the new social type of young woman who was flourishing under her eyes: and thus whether she was not chronologically incorrect. Not only, but as two years before, in 1913, in *The Custom of the Country*, Edith Wharton had given life to a “predatory young American woman” (Lewis 1975, 345), Undine Spragg, I also wonder whether, in creating Edith Beers (whose first name recalls Wharton’s!), Cather may not have had in mind this literary specimen of young womanhood conceived by a fellow woman writer whom she highly appreciated.

In devising Undine Spragg, whose career spans twelve years, from 1900 to 1912, Wharton was, however, more interested in focusing on the new barbarians (the unscrupulous *nouveaux riches*, men and women, from the provinces) who were invading and corrupting the refined (if hypocritical) Old New York gentry, rather than in depicting a new, emergent type of womanhood. Nonetheless, for social as well as for cultural reasons, Wharton was merciless in her portrayal of such a type, who stood “for everything in the new American female that Edith [Wharton] despised and recoiled from” (Lewis 1975, 350).

Fitzgerald’s views on the matter were somewhat different. In the ’20s, surrounded by flappers (and married to one), he was fascinated and exasperated by this exemplar of ostentatious, whimsical, voracious femininity. As an admirer of both Wharton and Cather, he may have wished to delve deeper than they did into this type to show its capricious, infantile, destructive, and yet also endearing sides, such as its explosive vitality and

12 Whereas in society columns and commercial literature the flapper had already been amply present.

13 All references from *The Song of the Lark* will henceforth appear parenthetically in the main text by the initials, *SL*, followed by page numbers.

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unflinching creativity.[14] In my opinion, in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Gloria Gilbert – the beautiful, elegant, self-centred and, ultimately, dangerous wife of Anthony Patch – has many traits in common with both Edith Beers and Undine Spragg. By starting his narrative in 1913, Fitzgerald may thus have wished to go back and examine the origins of the type and, contrary to actual chronology, appear as the first great writer to tackle the subject *in depth*. In effect, it is as if he was ordering his narrative to create the archaeology of a new fictional young woman.

Even if its action starts in 1913, there are revealing chronological slippages in *The Beautiful and Damned*, that show how, inevitably pulled towards his contemporaneity, its author made temporal leaps of about seven years. Tendencies in fashion are, on these matters, incontrovertible spies. At the beginning of the novel, for instance, when in real life women’s hairdos were curly, waved, and hair was kept long, the narrator writes that Gloria dons her hair bobbed: “It was not fashionable then. It was to be fashionable in five or six years”. And, to make this anachronism plausible, he immediately adds, “At that time it was considered extremely daring” (Fitzgerald 1922, 124).[15] Indeed! And fashionable Gloria would not have donned it.

But let me first recollect some of the main characteristics of Wharton’s protagonist. In Blake Nevius’s view, Undine Spragg is “the selfish, luxury-loving, thoroughly emancipated ‘new woman’”, and, as such, she is a “monstrosity” (*CC* viii, x). Wharton herself avowed that, like other “vulgar people”, Undine was “an engine of destruction through the illusions they [such people] kill and the generous ardors they turn to despair” (Wegener 1996, 110). The young, very beautiful, and spoiled only daughter of rich parents from the Midwest, Undine goes with them to New York in order to climb the social ladder. Incidentally, her name, while referring to the gadget through which her father made his fortune (hair-wavers), represents her personality: her vagaries fluctuate like her eponymous mythological water nymph, who lacked a soul. Grossly unlettered, but wilfully ambitious and gifted with a relentless energy and spirit of initiative, Undine thinks that the *right* marriage is the way to achieve respectability and power. In her narcissism, however, not only is she never really in love with any of her various husbands/lovers, but also comes to realise (against prevailing cultural tenets) that marriage is, in itself, an imprisonment. Her (supposed) first husband, Ralph Marvell, is an intelligent, gentle, but indolent, piti-

14 As Zelda – who was relentlessly trying to become an artist: a painter, a ballet-dancer, a writer – scathingly denounced in writing, Fitzgerald appropriated pages from her diary and letters to insert in this novel: “Mr. Fitzgerald – I believe that is how he spells his name – seems to believe that plagiarism begins at home” (Bruccoli 1991, 388**)**.

15 All references from *The Custom of the Country* will henceforth appear parenthetically in the main text by the initials, *CC*, followed by page numbers.

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able, and not particularly affluent Harvard man from a very respectable Old New York family. Although he is not "blind to her crudity and her limitations", he sees them as "a part of her grace and her persuasion" (*CC* 83), that is, as childish whims, and, consequently, addresses her as: "you foolish *child*" (*CC* 161; emphasis added). With him, much to her distress and even anger, Undine has a son whom she remorselessly neglects. In her greed and perpetual discontent, after becoming the kept woman of one of Ralph's cousins, and then a widow after Ralph's suicide, she marries a French nobleman, only to divorce him in Reno and remarry her (real) first husband, Elmer Moffatt (originally from her provincial hometown). Always dressed according to the latest dictates of fashion – Wharton was always anthropologically, sociologically, and historically extremely accurate –, Undine spends inordinate sums of money on clothes and jewelry, thus threatening to bankrupt the men whom she attracts. Money is, in fact, at the centre of all her worries: she never has enough of it. The true representative of her epoch of conspicuous consumption, like the addictive consumer, "she had always had the habit of going out to buy something when she was bored" (*CC* 521). Above all, "fiercely independent […] She wanted to surprise every one by her dash and originality" (*CC* 19) and, in so doing, she rides roughshod over all kinds of social convention: from rejecting chaperons to drinking liquor in public (*CC* 290, 394). Many of the characteristics of the flapper are thus present in her.

As for Cather's and Fitzgerald's characters, we might well start with their names: Edith derives from Anglo-Saxon and signifies 'riches, happiness, blessed' as well as 'war', suggesting the idea of 'blessed in war'.[16] Similarly, Gloria, from Latin, alludes to the 'splendour, praise, magnificence' and honour acquired by having performed important deeds, as in war, for instance. Their very names are, therefore, imbued with the idea of conflict. In addition, both young women come from rich Midwestern families (both Edith and Gloria originally are from Kansas City, Missouri) and they both have business tycoons as fathers. Furthermore, both women meet their future husbands, both Harvard men, in New York. Whereas Cather, however, deals with Edith in just a few pages (six, in the definitive edition), Fitzgerald's Gloria is, with her husband, at the very centre of *The Beautiful and Damned*.

In *The Song of the Lark* Edith Beers's attitudes, her way of dressing and her way of speaking, make her anachronistically look and sound like a flapper. After their first encounter, Fred Ottenburg describes her – at that point the fiancée of one of his friends (in a similar fashion, Gloria is the cousin of one of Anthony's friends) – as a "ripping beauty" (*SL* 368)

16 Her surname, Beers, recalls, of course, beer and may refer to the fact that Fred is intoxicated, first, by her and, later, by alcohol.

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and muses that "She entertained him prodigiously." (*SL* 369). He then goes into more detail: "She was dark and slender and fiery. She was witty and slangy; said daring things and carried them off with *nonchalance*". In addition, she "seemed whimsical and picturesque", and, tellingly, her "*childish* extravagance and contempt for all the serious facts of life could be charged to her father's generosity and his long packing-house purse" (*SL* 368; emphasis added). Spoiled and selfish, Edith goes to New York to buy her trousseau before her marriage, but confesses to Fred that she was not "keen" on her fiancé and she was marrying him simply because "One had to marry somebody" (*SL* 370). Three days after their first encounter, and without the least scruple, she decides to elope and marry Fred Ottenburg in New Jersey.

It is above all her clothes, however, that mark Edith as a flapper, as someone, that is, who is dressed according to twentieth-century fashion. Revealingly, in fact, she is said to dart about "in magnificent furs and pumps and close-clinging gowns, though that was the day of full skirts" (*SL* 368). In this flashback regarding (supposedly) the fashion of the 1880s, the reference is incorrect on two significant details. First, in those years, skirts hung straight from the hips and an overskirt was often draped diagonally across the body, leaving the underskirt exposed, while the back was gathered in several low-hanging puffs. Therefore, these skirts could not be properly called 'full'. Second, like Fitzgerald on bobbed hair, here Cather is making a temporal leap: in her case, of almost two decades. In fact, if Edith wears "close-clinging gowns" and "Her satin dress was a mere sheath, so conspicuous by its severity and scantiness" (*SL* 369), she does not don garments of the 1880s, but what was in fashion at the time the novel was written. In effect, from around 1906, the French designer Paul Poiret had created an entirely new way of dressing women: a way that had been taken up and spread throughout the Western world. Doing away with corsets and petticoats, he swathed the female body in 'lampshade' tunics, draped dresses, and oriental-looking cloaks (like Japanese kimonos), which were often lined with, or made of, fur. His cloaks clung to the body and, as they allowed freedom of movement, they were like enveloping, fluid cocoons. Poiret's dresses – made of silk, velvet, lamé, and brocades, and in unusual colours – were strictly cylindrical with almost abstract, minimalist lines. Although his garments would never be as short as those in vogue in the '20s, they were certainly their forerunners in shape and cut, as his innovations would be absorbed and developed by subsequent designers (such as Coco Chanel). Not by chance, at the end of *The Beautiful and Damned*, when the narration has reached the '20s, Gloria appears "wrapped in a warm kimona" (*BD* 395). Let us also bear in mind that Poiret visited the United States in 1913 (a fatal year!), something that Cather and Fitzgerald, who were both knowledgeable about matters of design and fashion (although, at the time, he was only seventeen), may

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have known. Not only this, but as furs were ultra-fashionable items of both the '10's – at the beginning of Fitzgerald's novel the narrator observes that there is "a great fluttering of furs along Fifth Avenue" (*BD* 31) – and the '20s – at the end of this same novel, "the girls' cloaks were delicate and beautifully furred" (*BD* 359) –, Edith, as if she were not a character of the 1880s, "darted about in magnificent furs" (*SL* 368), talks "over her fur collar" (*SL* 369) and holds her "muff" to her face (*SL* 370).

Like Edith, Gloria too – more appropriately, as far as chronology is concerned – loves furs and dons them as coats or stoles, as well as collars, trimmings, and muffs from the very beginning of and throughout the novel. As these few citations show, Gloria often wears fur: "Under her fur coat her dress was Alice-blue, with white lace crinkled stiffly about her throat" (*BD* 57); "Her fur-trimmed suit was gray" (*BD* 61); "She was in a shop now […] moving lithely among the velvets and the furs" (*BD* 106); "her fur coat swinging fashionably with her steps" (*BD* 106). As time goes on, she also dons "a new brown dress edged with fur" (*BD* 281). When Gloria becomes poor, she longs for a "gray squirrel coat" (*BD* 374). The last time we see her, through the eyes of the "pretty girl in yellow", on the deck of the liner that will take her and Anthony to Europe, Gloria is wearing "a Russian-sable coat that must have cost a small fortune" (*BD* 448). Fur, with its softness, warmth, lustre and, above all, its animal origins, hints at the cruelty personified by both Edith and Gloria – indeed, the latter is seen by Anthony, in Keats' words, as a "*belle dame sans merci*" (*BD* 329).[17] Significantly, Cather too compares Edith to an animal – and, precisely, to an active predator: "When she [Edith] wriggled out of her moleskin coat at luncheon, she looked like a slim black weasel" (*SL* 368-9). In Fitzgerald's case**,** toward the end of *The Beautiful and Damned* readers discover that he has emphasised fur so much, because he has a precise message to deliver: "At that time women [were] enveloped in long squirrel wraps […]. They seemed porcine and obscene; they resembled kept women in the concealing richness, the feminine animality of the garment" (*BD* 389).

In another behavioural echo of the flapper, Edith smokes incessantly, as Gloria will. For his part, after just two years of marriage, having learned to detest his wife – "Her wastefulness and cruelty revolted him […] Her grace was only an uneasy wriggle, her audacity was the result of insolence and envy, and her wit was restless spite" (*SL* 371-2) –, Fred finds solace in drinking, as Anthony will. When he meets Thea, Fred cannot remarry because Edith will not grant him a divorce.

There are other similarities, however, among the texts under discussion. Gloria, like Undine and Edith, is a young woman, full of "vitality" (*BD* 227). Just more so in the case of Gloria, who is said to dance "all afternoon

17 Fitzgerald had thought of making this the title of the novel.

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and all night" (*BD* 39). Brazen and proud of her unconventional behaviour – just as Edith and Undine are of theirs –, Gloria has such "arrogance" and "independence" (*BD* 201) that, according to her mother, she "has no sense of responsibility" (*BD* 39) and, like a looter, she declares, "If I wanted anything I'd take it" (*BD* 192). Her behaviour goes thus completely against the Victorian code still dominant in many bourgeois milieus. For instance, she freely talks about her legs to a young man whom she has casually encountered at a party and who confesses that "She aroused a great desire to see them" (*BD* 48). This reference to legs (a part of the female body that was still taboo in polite society) indirectly recurs also in Cather's novel, when Edith enters a hansom showing Fred "a long stretch of thin silk stocking" (*SL* 369). Completely self-centred – Anthony perceives "her hard selfishness" (*BD* 112) and her "inordinate egotism" (*BD* 161) –, Gloria, like Edith and Undine, always talks "about herself" (*BD* 60).

Furthermore, as far as physical characteristics go, the colours of Gloria's hair (blonde) and eyes (grey) have a magnetic effect on Anthony (as Undine's on Ralph and her other husbands/lovers). So much so that, for Anthony, Gloria's dazzling beauty "was agony to comprehend […] in a glance" (*BD* 57). Different as they are from those of the other two young women, after their first encounter Edith's dark hair and dark eyes have a similar effect on Fred. However, whereas Gloria's voice "wove along with faintly upturning, half-humorous intonations" (*BD* 59) and "was full of laughter" (*BD* 60), Edith's voice is "low and monotonous" (*SL* 369). In noting this, Cather forewarns readers that she will not appeal to a lover of music like Fred Ottenburg for very long.

In addition to all these congruities, echoes and similarities, at the beginning of *The Beautiful and Damned*, Gloria, rather like Edith, (and, basically, like Undine, if it were not for the wealth that marriages might bring her), is not interested in getting married.[18] When she is asked by Anthony about such a prospect, she answers, "I don't want to have responsibility and a lot of children to take care of" (*BD* 64).[19] As has been observed, "Playing the phallic Woman […] comes with a heavy price: the denial of one's *actual* femininity, insofar as this consists in a heterosexual imperative to breed" (Nowlin 2003, 114).[20] In effect, "She [Gloria] knew that in her breast she

18 For most of *The Song of the Lark*, however, the same is seemingly true of Thea Kronborg, who, when she is first confronted with Ralph's proposal, answers that she rather wants to wake up "every morning with the feeling that your life is your own, and your strength is your own, and your talent is your own; that you' re all there, and there's no sag in you!" (350). Since Thea, though, is following her artistic vocation, she is Cather's heroine.

19 Already in *This Side of Paradise*, Eleanor had said, "I have to marry, that goes without saying" (219).

20 According to the time's tenets, Gloria has masculine traits because she tries to become an actress in order to be economically self-sufficient.

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had never wanted children. […] her ironic soul whispered that motherhood was also the privilege of the female baboon" (*BD* 392-3). Differently from Undine – who, however, when she discovers she is pregnant, looks at Ralph with "a settled, a reasoned resentment" (*CC* 184) – Edith and Gloria have no children. Whereas we just infer that Edith is childless, as far as Gloria is concerned, all she wants from her relationships with men is to enjoy herself. As she says to Anthony, "'A woman should be able to kiss a man beautifully and romantically without any desire to be either his wife or his mistress'" (*BD* 113). In effect, the times' widely publicised form of sexual play was "petting, which included a variety of sexual activities short of intercourse" (Dumenil 1995, 136). Incidentally, it was again in 1913 that Margaret Sanger (birth-control activist, nurse and sex educator) began her campaign for contraception.

Not having children of their own, the three men – as far as Ralph is concerned, at least at the beginning of his relationship with Edith – convey their tenderness to their wives whom they consider "childish". Because she is often praised for her "childish" or "baby" mouth (*BD* 58, 72, 102, 400), and she is said to have a "childish heart" (*BD* 226) and even talks "as a very charming child" (*BD* 60), while her hair is endowed with a "childish glory" (*BD* 297) and her small hands are like those of "a child" (*BD* 62), Gloria succeeds in always winning over Anthony. As Fitzgerald had once said, these "childish" contemporary young women were a sort of mental baby vamps.[21] In the case of Gloria, to her personal characteristics, we might add those of the fashion and the manners of the times: an androgynous (boyish) body – flat chest, short hairdo, short skirts – and flirtatious postures.

Finally, just as lines from various arias and from Wagner's operas abound in *The Song of the Lark*, lines from the songs of the '10s recur in Fitzgerald's novel. And if in *The Song of the Lark* we read much about singers and music teachers, at the very beginning of *The Beautiful and Damned* we are informed that Anthony's mother, a Boston 'Society Contralto', "was a lady who sang, sang, sang" (*BD* 6). In addition, Gloria has a "cool soprano laughter" (*BD* 106).

Beset by poverty, apathy, and deception, if Gloria and Anthony have a troubled married life, the same is true, for different reasons, for Cather's couple. And, as far as Undine is concerned, if her various marriages and affairs are a disaster, her last marriage does not promise to end up in a better way, since she is always striving for "'something beyond'" (*CC* 54).

In *The Song of the Lark*, Fitzgerald may have found further suggestions that he took up in his 1925 novel, *The Great Gatsby*. At the height

21 In 1921, in an interview, Fitzgerald said, "we find the young woman of the 1920s flirting, kissing, viewing life lightly, saying damn without a blush, playing along the danger line in an immature way – a sort of *mental baby vamp*" (Bruccoli, Baugham 2004, 7; emphases added). The expression "baby vamp" recurs in this novel as well (*BD* 29).

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of his career, and to mark his characters indelibly, he again seems to have remembered Cather's novel, and once more he converts a minor detail in *The Song of the Lark* into a memorable turn of phrase in his own work. When Edith is reproached by her aunt for ridiculing the singers they have heard at the opera, she very rudely retorts, "What's the matter with you, old sport?" (*SL* 369). She thus anticipates Gatsby's slangy, but more amicable,[22] way of addressing other men. At the beginning of the 20th century, "old sport" was a British upper-class slang term and as such supports Gatsby's claim of having been to Oxford. But this way of addressing people may also indicate something decidedly masculine about Cather's seductive woman. Moreover, as Edith "ate nothing but alligator-pear salad […] and took cognac in her coffee" (*SL* 369), by mentioning the name of a ferocious animal rather than providing the name of the fruit in question (an avocado),[23] and by having her drink hard liquor without inhibitions (like Undine), Cather indirectly stresses the fierce and ambiguous nature of this young woman: her spitefulness and her androgyny. Could it be that Fitzgerald perceived in Edith somebody he would later turn into Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby*?

In many ways, therefore, besides the generally recognised influences that Frank Norris, H.L. Mencken, James Branch Cabell and Theodore Dreiser exercised on Fitzgerald, it is as if he wrote *The Beautiful and Damned* expanding on, that is, giving a more complete picture of the new type of young womanhood featured or sketched by Wharton and Cather, respectively. Moreover, some of the characteristic traits of Cather's Edith seem to have lodged so deeply in Fitzgerald's mind that he skilfully reinterpreted them in the masterpiece that he was to write three years later.

What differs widely is the three writers' attitude toward this type of young woman: despicable for both Wharton and Cather, upsetting but fascinating for Fitzgerald. As he declared in an interview as late as 1927, "The girls I wrote about were not a type – they were a generation. Free spirits" and also "They are just girls […]. […] they are young things with a splendid talent for life" (Bruccoli, Bryer 1971, 279, 281). Was it because Zelda was one of them? Was it to defend his choice of subject matter? Possibly both – and more.

22 To prove the point, Fred too uses this epithet ,'old sport', but when affectionately addressing Doctor Archie (*SL* 460).

23 Incidentally, this is another anachronism since, as Moseley observes, avocados were imported from South America to the United States in 1895, that is, after the Ottenburgs' encounter (*SL* 736).

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La poesia Beat in Italia: uno studio *translocal*

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Abstract Building on recent transnational Beat Generation scholarship and focusing on poetry, this essay aims to expand the geographical scope of Beat Generation culture by including Italy. It does so considering a number of questions, such as what ties Beat Generation poets had with Italy and Italian culture; how and when their texts migrated to Italy and with what effects on the receiving culture, including publishers, journalists, general readers and poets. It investigates the ramifications of Beat poetry as a transatlantic flux between the United States and Italy during roughly two and a half decades (1956-1980), re-discovering an otherwise neglected Italian American writer, and assessing whether the Beats' aesthetics did impact Italian culture glocally.

Keywords Beat Generation. Poetry. Italy. Glocal. Translocal study.

1 Le origini italiane

La prospettiva transnazionale privilegiata negli ultimi decenni dagli studi umanistici in generale e angloamericani in particolare ha potuto avvalersi, nel caso della Beat Generation, di una vastissima rete di rapporti internazionali che erano intessuti nell'esperienza sia artistica, sia personale dei singoli autori, nonché nel fenomeno Beat come espressione di un epocale spartiacque transculturale di portata globale.

Sebbene della Beat Generation abbiano fatto parte solo autori nordamericani (con un canone, peraltro, in espansione, cf. Skerl 2004), il ruolo di numerose culture straniere è stato subito determinante ed esplicito nella loro ispirazione artistica, dal vicino Messico a terre più lontane geograficamente e culturalmente, quali il Giappone e l'India. Profondamente segnati da una irrefrenabile *Wanderlust*, i Beat hanno fatto del viaggio una cifra immancabile delle loro vite e delle loro opere, coinvolgendosi a livello sociale, politico o intellettuale in nazioni quali il Nicaragua, Cuba, il Marocco, la Francia o provocando un'evoluzione nell'estetica letteraria della Grecia, del Regno Unito, della Turchia, dell'Austria e dell'allora Cecoslovacchia. Queste e altre connessioni transculturali sono l'oggetto dei più recenti studi sulla Beat Generation (cf. Grace, Skerl 2012; Quinn 2015;

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Fazzino 2016; Tytell 2017; Mortenson 2018). Elaborandone i presupposti e i risultati, il presente saggio include l’Italia nella mappatura del transnazionalismo Beat, concentrandosi sul genere della poesia. Partendo da quanta ‘Italia’ fosse presente nella formazione culturale dei vari autori, per arrivare all’impatto avuto sulla poesia italiana del secondo Novecento, il percorso analitico *translocal* mira a individuare i rapporti tra gli autori della Beat Generation e la cultura italiana in un arco di tempo che va dal 1956, anno di pubblicazione di *Howl*, alla fine degli anni Settanta.

Alcuni autori Beat erano di origine italiana, sebbene tale discendenza non abbia lasciato molte tracce in Philip Lamantia, notoriamente più vicino alla cultura del surrealismo francese che non ad altre letterature europee. Diane di Prima, cresciuta ascoltando l’opera e leggendo Dante col nonno materno, l’anarchico italoamericano Domenico Malozzi, è stata studiata in relazione al suo radicalismo politico e culturale e, sulla scia del *Second Wave Feminism*, nel suo rifiuto di uniformarsi a una identità femminile italoamericana normativa, espresso prevalentemente nella sua autobiografia del 2001, *Recollections of My Life as a Woman. The New York Years* (Giannini Quinn 2003).

Lawrence Ferlinghetti non è venuto a conoscenza del proprio vero cognome fino alla tarda adolescenza poiché il padre, emigrato da Brescia in California agli inizi del Novecento, lo aveva trasformato in Ferling, accorciandolo in un processo di americanizzazione successivamente chiarito dal poeta stesso. In occasione dell’anno della cultura italiana a San Francisco (2013), il proprietario della City Lights ha dichiarato: «at that time the Italian was considered the lowest thing on the social ladder, he was the WOP, the dago, smelling of garlic and peperoni, and the idea was to get away from that image as fast as possible» (Ferlinghetti 2013). Negli anni della maturità, Ferlinghetti si sarebbe avvicinato alla tradizione letteraria italoamericana, in particolare alla poesia di Vincent Ferrini, nella raccolta *Landscapes of Living and Dying* (cf. Spahr 2015, 177-81). Per quanto riguarda la sua attività editoriale, in anni successivi all’arco temporale che analizzo in questo saggio, i contatti con l’Italia saranno sempre maggiori, con traduzioni (l’edizione dei *Roman Poems* di Pier Paolo Pasolini nel 1986) e l’apertura della City Lights Italia a Firenze nel 1997.

Gregory Nunzio Corso, nato a New York da genitori calabresi, è cresciuto in famiglie adottive e case di accoglienza cattoliche per i primi anni della sua vita, parlando unicamente un dialetto italoamericano fino agli inizi dell’età scolastica. Nel periodo di detenzione nel carcere di Clinton lesse i romanzi *pulp* di Donald Clarke ambientati tra i gangster di Little Italy, come *Louis Beretti, the Story of a Gunman*, una versione decisamente ‘adulterata’ dell’italianità (King 2015, 94). Ma la sua ibridità linguistica è stata più volte vista come la matrice del linguaggio idiosincratico e fortemente inventivo che avrebbe caratterizzato la sua produzione poetica. Jack Kerouac, in un commento poi pubblicato da Ferlinghetti in quarta di

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copertina della prima edizione di *Gasoline*, definì Corso «a tough young kid from the Lower East Side who […] sang Italian song as sweet as Caruso and Sinatra, but in words». Gerald Nicosia, biografo di Kerouac, ha fatto una simile connessione: «he drew on everything – the romantic poets, he used the language of Italian gangsters and mixed it all together in a symphony of words».[1] Nella raccolta di poesie *Happy Birthday of Death* Allen Ginsberg ha rintracciato «a sort of Italian American double-talk» (2017, 306) alla base della 'disarmonia' della lingua poetica di Corso. A parte qualche richiamo all'Italia nelle sue prime due raccolte di poesie (il più noto dei quali è nel componimento «Italian Extravaganza»), non si può parlare di una significativa influenza tematica nella sua opera, bensì riconoscere la sua iniziale esposizione a due diverse lingue come la radice del suo inglese non-standard, ciò che la critica ha definito «his quirky syntax and diction» (Stephenson 1989, 23).

Questa ipotesi è stata avanzata per numerosi altri scrittori oltre che per Corso, ma due casi in particolare possono essere significativi in questo contesto: un altro autore Beat, Kerouac, e una poetessa italiana con la quale, negli anni Ottanta, Corso ebbe un intenso rapporto di amicizia, Amelia Rosselli. L'autore di *On the Road*, di origine francocanadese, fece del suo esilio linguistico una forza sovversiva dal punto di vista dello stile, sentendosi, peraltro, affine a Corso in quello che definiva il suo «miraculous making of words into English from the head of an Italian who never spoke English in The Lower East Side until he was seven» (citato in Fazzino 2016, 55). Nata in Francia da madre britannica e padre italiano e cresciuta trilingue negli Stati Uniti, in Gran Bretagna e poi in Italia, Rosselli ha scritto in francese, lingua che ha gradualmente abbandonato, in inglese e in italiano. Più di un critico (Giudici 1981; Tandello 2012) ha visto nella sua educazione plurilingue la fonte di uno stile poetico improntato allo sperimentalismo e a una particolare libertà creativa che le ha permesso di distorcere parole o inventarne di nuove, esattamente come stava facendo Corso negli stessi anni. Avida lettrice (e poi traduttrice) di poesia inglese e americana, Rosselli non apprezzava particolarmente i poeti Beat, trovando un po' provinciali e quasi presupponenti le loro innovazioni stilistiche (2004, 208). Nel 1975 condusse un programma radiofonico sulla poesia americana del XX secolo, scegliendo di presentare «tutto tranne la Beat Generation», ma poco prima di incontrare Corso di persona nel 1979, sembrò aver trovato in lui l'unico poeta Beat in grado di suscitare il suo apprezzamento. Recensì, infatti, molto positivamente *Benzina*, il suo primo volume di poesie in traduzione italiana, considerando l'autore finanche superiore a Ginsberg (2004, 171).

1 Citato in Ness, Carol (2001). «Poet Gregory Corso, Last of Beat Triumvirate». *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 January, D7.

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2 Autori e testi in movimento

Tra i numerosi paesi in cui i Beat hanno soggiornato o viaggiato, quasi sempre con lo scopo di abbattere quelle che Ferlinghetti ha definito «obscene boundaries» (2015, 109), l'Italia ha avuto un ruolo significativo per una serie di motivi, tra i quali il suo patrimonio culturale classico e moderno e la presenza, sia nel passato (Keats e Shelley), sia nel Novecento (W.H. Auden ed Ezra Pound), di poeti angloamericani particolarmente amati da alcuni scrittori Beat. Alan Ansen, un esponente più marginale della Beat Generation, fu il primo a visitare l'Italia, dove visse per qualche anno prima di trasferirsi in Grecia nel 1960. Nel 1956 William Borroughs lo andò a trovare a Venezia, dove Ansen viveva già da due anni, dopodiché tornò in Marocco, che aveva trasformato nella sua patria adottiva. Passando per la dimora di Borroughs a Tangeri, Allen Ginsberg arrivò in Italia l'anno successivo in compagnia di Peter Orlovsky. A casa di Ansen, a Venezia, mentre quest'ultimo scriveva composizioni sulla città e sulle nobildonne venete (1959, 15), Ginsberg scrisse una prima versione di «Man's Glory», una poesia in cui appaiono Milano, Firenze e Venezia, «glittering in Canal Grande [...] rocking in Venice like a great golden calliope» (1984, 260). A Roma si immerse nella visita di musei e monumenti, infuriandosi nel vedere le statue dei Musei Vaticani con i genitali coperti da foglie di fico (1995, 368). Tra le rovine del Foro Romano, invece, compensò la sua precedente reazione, vedendo «[t]he rainstained fragment of an ass»:

> a human ass
> was here two thousand years ago
> –some boy turned round
> stuck out his behind
> and posed
> Michelangelo remembered
> when the palaces had fallen–
> When the cities are forgotten
> there'll be a human ass. (1995, 372)

Insieme agli autori ebbe presto inizio il flusso delle loro opere attraverso le frontiere, spesso accompagnato da veri o falsi miti, dovuti all'eco internazionale che le questioni legali relative alla pubblicazione di *Howl* stavano provocando. In Italia, la traduzione e la diffusione della letteratura Beat si deve principalmente a Fernanda Pivano, alla quale la Mondadori chiese, nel 1957, un parere sull'opportunità di pubblicare in traduzione *On the Road* di Kerouac. La sua risposta affermativa fu il primo passo verso un impegno a contrastare l'ostilità che, come lei stessa ribadì, percepiva negli operatori culturali italiani dell'epoca. Mentre quotidiani e rotocalchi presentavano i Beat in un misto di sensazionalismo e curiosità pruriginosa

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condita di droga e sesso,[2] Pivano tentava di rivolgersi direttamente a un pubblico più intellettuale. Già nel 1959 aveva tenuto una conferenza in uno spazio di proprietà dell'USIS, lo United States Information Center, in cui promuoveva la nuova cultura d'oltreoceano e nello stesso anno pubblicò un lungo articolo sui Beat, con taglio tra il letterario e il sociologico, sulla rivista *aut aut*. Oltre a lavorare a una storica antologia, *Poesia degli ultimi americani* (che fu pubblicata nel 1964), Pivano entrò nel vivo della diffusione degli autori Beat quando, nel 1961, conobbe Ginsberg e lavorò con lui a una raccolta di poesie in traduzione tratte da *Howl* e *Kaddish*. Ma l'editore che l'aveva commissionata, Mondadori, ne ritardò l'uscita fino ai primi giorni del 1966. Ciò avvenne perché Elio Vittorini, che all'epoca lavorava per la Mondadori, nonché l'editore stesso, espressero forti dubbi sull'opportunità di pubblicare un autore Beat dopo che l'edizione italiana di *The Subterraneans* di Kerouac fu sequestrata per oscenità. Dopo un lungo scambio di lettere tra Vittorini e Pivano, e sdegnate lettere di Ginsberg all'editore (cf. Pivano 1976, 58-9), la raccolta di poesie uscì col titolo, suggerito dall'autore stesso, di *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. In un episodio tra i più ridicoli del moralismo culturale italiano del secondo dopoguerra, il libro uscì con una sfilza di puntini di sospensione che sostituivano la traduzione di tutti i termini relativi al sesso.

L'opera di Ferlinghetti e Corso migrò in traduzione italiana leggermente più tardi rispetto a quella di Ginsberg. Del primo fu pubblicato nel 1960 il romanzo *Her* (*Lei*), non propriamente il più significativo dei suoi scritti, e *A Coney Island of the Mind* (*Coney Island della mente*) nel 1968, pubblicizzato come il libro di poesie che aveva venduto il maggior numero di copie al mondo. Corso dovette attendere ancora un anno per la pubblicazione in italiano di *Gasoline* (*Benzina*), sebbene «Bomb», pubblicata in *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, avesse già suscitato notevole scalpore, specialmente nei casi in cui l'ironia dell'autore nei confronti dell'ordigno nucleare andava perduta.

3 La ricezione

La Beat Generation stava diventando, per i lettori italiani, non più solo un fenomeno legato ai giovani americani ribelli, ma un gruppo più o meno omogeneo di autori con un relativo *corpus* letterario che poteva essere fruito e giudicato direttamente. L'autore che catalizzò il maggior interesse, oltre a Kerouac, fu Ginsberg. Salvatore Quasimodo, che all'epoca teneva

2 Fenghi, Orsola (1959). «Droga e manicomio li aiutano a cercare Dio». *Gente*, 16 ottobre 28-9; Forlivesi, Piero (1959). «I falsi eroi della strada». *Popolo*, 9 luglio, 5; Manisco, Lucio (1959). «Avvolti in nuvole di marijuana i poeti 'beat' di San Francisco». *Il Messaggero*, 31 ottobre, 5.

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una rubrica sul settimanale *Tempo*, si occupò almeno un paio di volte della sua poesia, difendendo e apprezzando il suo anticonformismo – paragonandolo a quello di Saffo, Dante e Leopardi[3] – e lodando il suo coraggio nel difendere la democrazia americana contro il capitalismo e il consumismo.[4] La maggior parte delle recensioni di *Jukebox all’idrogeno* furono positive, sebbene nell’Italia democristiana e bigotta non mancò chi si sentisse in dovere di denigrare il libro, pescando dal solito vocabolario del trito i termini di oscenità e sporcizia, e inserendo Ginsberg nella schiera degli «umiliatori dell’umanità» come Marx, Freud, Sartre e Foucault (Belfiori 1967, 302). È interessante notare, invece, come altri abbiano subito riconosciuto la potenza di una poesia che sarebbe «eplosa» come una bomba all’idrogeno contro l’umanità narcotizzata, al tempo stesso in grado di provocare «un vasto e concreto discorso intorno alla condizione della poesia nel mondo d’oggi, non soltanto americano, ma […] universale».[5] Citando entusiasticamente i primi versi di *Howl*, un altro critico scrisse «così comincia la lunga antifonia dell’*Urlo*: e in quel nuovo girone dantesco siamo elencati tutti, tutti perduti e perciò tutti da salvare».[6] Se qualcuno riconosceva l’universalità di Ginsberg, c’era chi ne percepiva l’americanità come elemento di differenza. Un intervistatore gli chiese, infatti, come sarebbe stato se fosse stato un poeta italiano. Ginsberg rispose, tra il serio e il faceto, che avrebbe scritto una poesia sul divorzio, perché era giusto che un poeta italiano affrontasse quei temi e lo facesse pubblicamente.[7]

Molto meno entusiastiche furono le autorità italiane nei confronti del poeta, che finì per due volte in questura. A Roma fu fermato dalla polizia poiché si intratteneva con i ‘capelloni’ a Piazza di Spagna, mentre a Spoleto, dopo aver letto, in occasione del Festival dei due Mondi, la poesia «Who Be Kind To», trovò ad aspettarlo degli agenti che lo tennero in cella per una notte su accuse di oscenità. I versi incriminati furono:

> I want the orgy of our flesh, orgy
> of all eyes happy, orgy of the soul
> kissing and blessing its mortal-grown
> body,
> orgy of tenderness beneath the neck, orgy of
> kindness to thigh and vagina

3 Quasimodo, Salvatore (1967). «Un Nobel incontra un beat». *Tempo*, 24 ottobre, 21.

4 Quasimodo, Salvatore (1966). «Colloqui con Quasimodo». *Tempo*, 4 maggio, 19.

5 Mauro, Walter (1966). «L’America di Allen Ginsberg». *Mattino*, 10 febbraio, 3.

6 Vigorelli, Giancarlo (1966). «Il libro del giorno. Il Rimbaud d’America». *Tempo*, 16 febbraio, 65.

7 Pallottelli, Duilio (1966). «Ci salverà la marijuana». *L’Europeo*, 16 giugno, 76-9.

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Desire given with meat hand
and cock, desire taken with
mouth and ass, desire returned
to the last sigh! (Ginsberg 1984, 361-2)

Quando, all’alba del giorno successivo, fu rilasciato, andò a cogliere dei fiori e li diede all’agente che lo aveva denunciato. L’occasione si prestò a commenti politicizzati: sul settimanale di destra *Specchio*, un articolo applaudì l’azione di polizia,[8] mentre sul quotidiano comunista *L’Unità*, venne deprecata l’arbitrarietà dell’accaduto e denunciata la «solita ‘cultura’ borghese» pronta a farsi avanti quando apparivano ostacoli «alla sua infinita crociata di menzogne e mistificazioni».[9]

Se Ferlinghetti e Corso, entrambi invitati a leggere le proprie poesie al Festival di Spoleto, destarono meno preoccupazione se non meno entusiasmo, non passò inosservata la loro origine italiana. Riferendosi a Gregory Corso, un critico affermò semplicisticamente che era italiano il maggiore poeta americano,[10] mentre un altro scrisse un lungo articolo su quelli che definiva i «poeti col trattino», applicando a Corsor e Ferlinghetti il concetto di *hyphenated American* e riscontrando nel loro «europeismo» il motivo per cui la loro poesia non era scritta in un idioma prettamente americano, ovvero nella «travolgente impennata protestataria» degli altri Beat (Botta 1966, 181).

3.1 Il rizoma italiano

Nel suo studio sulla dimensione transnazionale della letteratura Beat, Jimmy Fazzino ha lavorato sul concetto di ‘mondializzazione’ della letteratura americana, spiegando il suo utilizzo del termine *worlding* (presente anche nel sottotitolo del libro, *Beat Generation Writing and the Worlding of U.S. Literature*), come antiegemonico e dotato di «attention to the always uneven encounter between the local and the global» (2016, 11). Si è ave valso anche della teoria del rizoma di Gilles Deleuze e Felix Guattari, richiamandone la natura di connessione sotterranea «between semiotic chains, organizations of power and circumstances related to the arts, sciences and social struggles» (46-7). Più di un terreno, quindi, si presta all’investigat zione di crescite rizomiche nella dimensione *glocal* – o *translocal* – della

8 «Il cibo del poeta». *Specchio*, 16 luglio 1967, 47.

9 Bertelli, Sauro (1967). «Allen Ginsberg. La bestia nera dei benpensanti». *L’Unità*, 13 settembre, 8.

10 Pedullà, Walter (1969). «È un italiano il maggiore poeta degli Stati Uniti?». *Avanti*, 25 maggio, 5.

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poesia Beat in Italia. Il primo è l’impatto della poesia Beat su coloro che operavano nello stesso settore, e da qui si possono indagare due direzioni. Una è quella dei poeti amatoriali, l’altra quella dei poeti canonici.

La Beat Generation fu a lungo percepita in Italia come fenomeno sociale e in quanto tale si prestò da una parte alle forze dell’ordine e all’*establishment* in generale come facile etichetta nei confronti dei giovani ribelli degli anni ’60, dall’altra fu d’ispirazione per alcuni di questi giovani che nutrivano interessi intellettuali. Questi ultimi mescolavano insoddisfazione politica e sociale a una passione per la letteratura, organizzavano *reading* pubblici in perfetto stile Beat, fondavano club e si dedicavano a pubblicazioni che andavano dai semplici ciclostilati a riviste più strutturate. Dal punto di vista prettamente letterario, la scena beat italiana non ha lasciato tracce se non di carattere dilettantistico, tra cui potremmo ricordare le poesie di Poppi Ranchetti, curatore del periodico *I lunghi piedi dell’uomo*, il romanzo di Silla Ferradini *I fiori chiari* che racconta la Milano beat, nonché la figura controversa di Aldo Piromalli, poi migrato verso la scena alternativa di Amsterdam. Gli ultimi anni del decennio videro la fioritura di numerose pubblicazioni periodiche, tra cui la più nota è *Mondo Beat*, pubblicata tra il 1966 e il 1967, direttamente ispirata alla Beat Generation, sebbene non esclusivamente dedicata alla letteratura, bensì anche alla politica e alle questioni sociali. Sul quarto numero della serie, un articolo non firmato, raccontava in modo efficace l’atmosfera dell’epoca:

> oltre alla pacifica protesta degli antimilitaristi-make love not war su tutti i giacconi e la silenziosa protesta dei capelloni che si fanno insultare senza reagire e i lunghi discorsi sul sesso e sulla pillola e sulla pace nel Vietnam […] e la polizia che interviene perché ha paura di questi discorsi e accusa i giovani di essere sporchi e malnutriti e il razzismo all’italiana si sfoga contro la lunghezza dei capelli da parte di chi ha capelli e idee corte, e i cortei per il divorzio, e i cortei per la pillola, e i cortei per il diritto all’obiezione di coscienza, e le lunghe notti trasferendosi in osterie tra operai-ragazzi-hipsters-donne ubriache-angeli santificati dal vino; o nei locali beat ad urlare la rabbia di un giorno che non finisce mai […] o ad improvvisare furiosi happening o poesie in équipe gridando e maledicendo il mondo.[11]

A causa di un articolo «sull’adulterio maschile e femminile», la rivista fu ostracizzata dal Vaticano e sequestrata dalla polizia. In un manifesto redatto insieme a un’altra organizzazione controculturale, Onda Verde, la redazione invocava libertà sessuale, obiezione di coscienza contro la leva militare e «la libertà di divorziare». Non c’è da stupirsi se le istituzioni

11 «Cosa accade a Piazza di Spagna? Cosa accade» (1967). *Mondo Beat 2*, 8.

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furono immediatamente allertate e, dopo l’ennesimo sequestro, la rivista chiuse i battenti (cf. De Martino, Grispigni 1997).

Pur non occupandosi solo di poesia, altre riviste dichiaravano nel titolo la filiazione diretta con il poema di Ginsberg, ovvero *Urlo Beat* e *Grido Beat*. *Parentesi Beat* mirava a interagire con i lettori, chiedendo loro di scrivere ciò che volevano nelle pagine bianche della rivista (Echaurren, Solaris 1999, 63). La stessa Pivano lavorò a un periodico in collaborazione con Ginsberg. Intitolato *Pianeta fresco* per via di un’espressione usata da Ginsberg nei confronti di William Carlos Williams, ebbe vita breve e chiuse dopo due numeri, ma segnò un alto livello di originalità artistica ed è un significativo prodotto delle fertilizzazioni transculturali dell’epoca. Estremamente ricco dal punto di vista estetico e basato sul *San Francisco Oracle*, *Pianeta fresco* rifiutava l’idea della lettura come attività passiva e pubblicò testi non necessariamente stampati da sinistra a destra o dall’alto verso il basso, ma che procedevano in varie direzioni, obbligando in questo modo il lettore a prendere maggiore coscienza del proprio ruolo nella costruzione del senso testuale. Sebbene di brevissima durata, *Pianeta fresco* segnò l’apice delle attività di stampa alternativa in Italia direttamente collegate alla Beat Generation.

Oltre a Salvatore Quasimodo e Amelia Rosselli, la dimensione glocale della poesia Beat non poteva non coinvolgere altri poeti italiani. Giuseppe Ungaretti incontrò Ginsberg per la prima volta a New York nel 1965 in occasione di una vendita di beneficenza, nella quale ai partecipanti veniva chiesto di donare qualcosa di personale. Non avendo nulla con sé, Ungaretti, che all’epoca aveva 77 anni, mise la mano nei pantaloni e diede un pelo pubico, un gesto che colpì molto Ginsberg (cf. Pivano 1976, 112), il quale lo avrebbe definito il più simpatico «vecchio poeta» dopo William Carlos Williams. L’anno successivo, a Napoli, Ungaretti lesse brani da *Kaddish*, spendendo parole molto positive nei confronti del collega americano (cf. Ungaretti 1989). Qualche mese più tardi, a Spoleto, Ginsberg ricambiò l’omaggio, recitando in pubblico alcune poesie dal *Taccuino del vecchio* di Ungaretti.

3.1.1 Un incontro tra giganti

Le maggiori affinità con Ginsberg – inevitabilmente il poeta Beat che suscitò più interesse – dimostrò di averle Pier Paolo Pasolini. Durante il suo primo viaggio negli Stati Uniti nel 1966 Pasolini non solo passò da un disinteresse a un netto entusiasmo nei confronti della letteratura americana, ma si innamorò di New York, visualizzandola nella figura di un poeta, «come certi poeti che ogniqualvolta scrivono un verso fanno una

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bella poesia» (1999b, 1598).[12] Ancor più rivelatrice l'equazione che egli suggerì tra New York e Ginsberg, suggellata da una dichiarazione di fratellanza intellettuale: «Era dai vecchi tempi di Machado, che non facevo una lettura fraterna come quella di Ginsberg». Nel suo anticonformismo fu anche divertito dalle apparizioni ubriache di Kerouac nei media italiani, che invece avrebbero suscitato «l'ironia, la noia, la disapprovazione degli stupidi letterati e dei meschini giornalisti italiani» (1999a, 1438). Sulla Beat Generation come fenomeno collettivo, Pasolini avrebbe espresso un parere assolutamente positivo, in quanto protesta «pura» contro *establishment* e consumismo, in opposizione a una certa aria di sufficienza con cui il movimento veniva recepito in Italia. Come è stato scritto, «the idealization of Ginsberg seems to correspond, in Pasolini, to an admission of his own limits and frustrations, while the acknowledgment of Ginsberg's poetic achievements indirectly sheds light on Pasolini's own redefinition of the poet's mandate in relation to student protest» (Bondavalli 2015, 140).

Che si trattasse di una idealizzazione basata su dati effettivi o su una lettura soggettiva, gli elementi che avvicinano questi due giganti della poesia del Novecento sono numerosi. Oltre allo spirito antiegemonico, le preoccupazioni di Pasolini per questioni morali e civili inscritte ne *Le ceneri di Gramsci* sono state considerate profondamente affini a quelle espresse da Ginsberg in «Howl».[13] Si tratta di una coincidenza, peraltro, che, considerando le date di pubblicazione delle due opere (e ricordando che, sebbene raccolte nel 1957, le poesie di Pasolini erano state scritte e pubblicate negli anni precedenti) non si poteva basare sulla conoscenza diretta dei testi, ma solo su una effettiva affinità d'ispirazione. Entrambi i poeti sono stati avvicinati alla tradizione sciamanica, Pasolini da Andrea Zanzotto (1980, 204), Ginsberg dalla critica a lui contemporanea e da quella recente (cf. Mortuza 2013, 78-80), ed entrambi ebbero un profondo interesse per aree geografiche che all'epoca venivano definite come Terzo Mondo, per un desiderio di mettere a confronto la civiltà occidentale con le culture indigene che era condiviso, in realtà, dalla maggior parte degli autori Beat.

Se l'influenza della cultura *underground* e Beat americana è stata rinvenuta nel teatro pasoliniano (Casi 2005, 172) e tracce del viaggio newyorkese, compreso l'incontro poetico con Ginsberg, appaiono in «Poeta delle ceneri» e «Il PCI ai giovani!!» (cf. Lombardo 2015, 149), aggiungerei che i versi lunghi della raccolta del 1971, *Trasumanar e organizzar*, segnalano un'influenza anche stilistica da parte della poesia di Ginsberg, sebbene lo stile della lirica pasoliniana non abbia avuto un'evoluzione lineare, essendo

12 Sull'evoluzione del rapporto che Pasolini ebbe con gli Stati Uniti, cf. Felice 2015 e Cadel 2015.

13 Cf. Siciliano 1978, 306; Palmieri, Franco (1968). «Ginsberg e la verità». *Avanti*, 1 novembre, 3.

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stato abbastanza ibrido per tutta la vita del poeta. Tuttavia, i suoi versi erano brevi e legati alla metrica tradizionale nelle raccolte degli anni '40 e dei primi anni '50, mentre la prosa stava già contaminando i componimenti de *Le ceneri di Gramsci* (cf. Bandini 2003, XXVII). La prossimità tematica con la poesia di Ginsberg rilevata in quest'opera continua a farsi sentire tra i versi di *Trasumanar*, definiti dalla critica come la poesia «insieme personale, pubblica e politica» dell'artista friulano (Lorenzini 1991, 68). Poiché la questione del modello che avrebbe ispirato la raccolta pasoliniana del 1971 è in qualche modo ancora aperta e un critico ha suggerito i drammi in versi di Eliot e di Auden (Bandini 2003, LVI), sussistono le condizioni per rintracciare, tra le onnivore letture di Pasolini, un'influenza tematica e stilistica di Ginsberg più forte di quanto si sia ipotizzato finora. Dopotutto, ciò che il poeta italiano apprezzò di più nel collega americano fu la sua capacità di creare un linguaggio nuovo, come gli scrisse in una delle più citate tra le sue lettere:

> Caro, angelico Ginsberg,
> […] tu, che ti rivolti contro i padri borghesi assassini, lo fai restando dentro il loro stesso mondo… classista (sì, in Italia ci esprimiamo così), e quindi sei costretto a inventare di nuovo e completamente giorno per giorno, parola per parola, il tuo linguaggio rivoluzionario. Tutti gli uomini della tua America sono costretti, per esprimersi, ad essere inventori di parole! Noi qui invece (anche quelli che hanno adesso sedici anni) abbiamo già il nostro linguaggio rivoluzionario bell'e pronto, con dentro la sua morale. (1988, 631-3)

3.1.2 Un Beat dimenticato?

Il rizoma Beat più significativo in Italia potrebbe essere un poeta italoamericano poco frequentato dalla critica accademica, Nat Scammacca. Pochi anni dopo la formazione del movimento di poesia sperimentale Gruppo 63, avvenuta in un albergo di Palermo nell'ottobre del 1963, fu fondato, sempre in Sicilia, il cosiddetto Antigruppo. Nato per volere di Scammacca in polemica con il precedente, il gruppo ha ricevuto attenzione quasi unicamente come fenomeno locale. Ma nella prospettiva *glocal* Scammacca e l'Antigruppo assumono un ruolo più determinante, prestandosi all'analisi di attività poetiche direttamente connesse alla poesia Beat in un contesto che annulla le frontiere nazionali. Ciò è possibile sia perché Scammacca è stato definito un poeta Beat,[14] sia perché egli stesso e altri membri del

14 Gullo, Tano (2012). «Il poeta beat trapanese Scammacca, storia di amori e di follie». *La Repubblica*, 11 maggio, 40.

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gruppo stabilirono un dialogo – solo in parte virtuale – con Lawrence Ferlinghetti su tematiche e stili della poesia Beat.

Nato a Brooklyn nel 1924, quaranta anni più tardi Scammacca si trasferì in Sicilia, dove ha passato il resto della sua vita scrivendo poesie, autobiografie e prose varie, e operando come traduttore di poesia dall’inglese all’italiano e dal siciliano all’inglese. Amico di Ferlinghetti, ne ha tradotto e raccolto alcune poesie in un volume che ha intitolato *Poesie politiche*. Nell’introduzione ha dichiarato:

> mentre Ferlinghetti propone il populismo in California, io faccio altrettanto qui in Sicilia. […] Il populismo è l’underground dell’uomo comune e di questo uomo comune, dei giovani, dei poveri, degli operai degli Stati Uniti è il linguaggio di cui si serve Lawrence Ferlinghetti, così come del contadino, dello studente, del manovale siciliano è il linguaggio con cui si esprime l’Antigruppo. (1977, 8)

Ferlinghetti viene spesso citato nelle attività dell’Antigruppo, il cui manifesto appare direttamente ispirato all’estetica Beat: i termini ricorrenti, infatti, sono una «poetica libertaria», una «arte nuova», «spontanea», «fatta dal popolo», «arte come esperienza» e l’artista come «rivoluzionario», accompagnati da una forte impronta antiegemonica e da una particolare attenzione all’aspetto orale della poesia (Bonanno 1975, 88-9). Nelle parole di Scammacca, si trattava di «a group against groups, against the *fascisti*, the mafia, the privileged establishment which […] collaborates to suppress the common man and his essential creative force» (1985, 93). Secondo una pratica di condivisione pubblica della poesia, che venne immediatamente percepita come una delle caratteristiche principali della lirica Beat (cf. Amoruso 1969, 143), l’Antigruppo si dedicò ad attività di letture pubbliche. I suoi membri viaggiarono ripetutamente nell’entroterra siciliano, fino a toccare lontani villaggi di contadini o di pescatori e baraccopoli di terremotati (Val Belice e isola di Ustica, tra le altre mete), diffondendo la poesia e le arti visive. Nel 1973 il gruppo pubblicò una voluminosa antologia delle proprie poesie, prose e manifesti, tra cui una sorta di dichiarazione di intenti sotto forma di lettera indirizzata al proprietario della City Lights.

> Caro Lawrence Ferlinghetti, […] bisogna approntare un libro degli Antigruppo in Sicily, con agganci in Italy e in Usa, che faccia conoscere ai contemporanei e tramandi ai posteri, almeno per mille anni, quanto noi abbiamo operato per lo smantellamento delle baronìe culturali – di destra e di sinistra – nell’isola! La Sicilia – e tu lo sai, Lawrence – è la terra benedetta da Allah e maledetta da Gianni Agnelli. Il quale, da queste parti, rappresenta l’equivalente del vostro Henry Ford. […] Sicily Italy Usa. Un itinerario quanto mai suggestivo, provocatorio, alludente, mafia and *consciousness-expeding* [*sic*] *drugs*, i riti di iniziazione agli allucinogeni concelebrati al

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> suono dell'*acid rock*, il *Citywide Women's Liberation* e il *Gay Liberation Front*. L'*Underground* e il *Movement*... Ma l'*Antigruppo* siculo – credimi, Lawrence – non è niente di tutto ciò. La nostra contro-cultura, il nostro dissenso, accompagnato ora dall'entusiasmo prorompente, ora da una *sickness* profonda e indefinibile, sconoscono punte estreme di violenza, l'omicidio e il suicidio, persino le forme clamorose della pubblicità. Della pubblicità all'americana, per intenderci; anche se a un recente «Palermo Pop 1971» Ignazio Apolloni e Vira Fabra insieme a Nat Scammacca si aggiravano per i vicoli della capitale maomettana indossando camicie variopinte sulle quali erano state vistosamente trascritte poesie di fuoco contro l'establishment. Nell'isola poi siamo decisamente eterosessuali. Da noi il gallismo – non certamente quello volgarizzato da un Vitaliano Brancati – ha salde radici memoriali nell'antica istituzione dell'harem. (Calì, Di Maria 1972, XXII, XXVIII)

Questa lunga citazione è motivata dalla quantità di riflessioni che suggerisce: come prima cosa rivela un forte e ribadito desiderio di confronto con la Beat Generation e con la cultura statunitense in generale, sebbene con tentativi di distinzione – e un'alternanza, specialmente per Scammacca, nell'uso dell'inglese e dell'italiano. Un confronto, quindi, vòlto a ribadire una condizione simile, ma una reazione *sui generis*. In seconda istanza, il brano denota una prossimità con la cultura araba che, seppur presentata in chiave esagerata, parlerebbe, paradossalmente, alle più irrazionali paure dell'italiano di oggi. Da ultimo, trapela da queste dichiarazioni un sessismo al tempo stesso ingenuo e sentito come fortemente identitario. Esso, infatti, informa espressamente gli scritti in cui Scammacca definisce le basi dell'estetica dell'Antigruppo e il loro concetto della figura del poeta, al quale sarebbe permesso scrivere versi lunghi solo se è «fisicamente forte» come Allen Ginsberg, mentre se «è delicato e femmineo, il suo verso sarà più semplice e meno cumulativo». In un'impennata di maschilismo, Scammacca termina queste osservazioni affermando che le donne, «anche se hanno lingue lunghe, avranno sempre versi corti» (1970, 45).

Scrittore prolifico, Scammacca fu sicuramente il più notevole tra gli artisti dell'Antigruppo, e se c'è un'influenza Beat sulla sua pratica poetica oltre che sulle sue teorizzazioni, questa può essere rinvenuta nella sua prima raccolta, *In a Lonely Room*, nella quale *topoi* Beat come il sotterraneo, la strada, il carcere, le accuse al consumismo e il disagio psichico sono ricorrenti, per esempio nel lungo componimento «Complaints of the Petit Burgeois» (1966, 50-64). Sul versante teorico, scrisse ripetutamente in opposizione al Gruppo 63, di cui criticava la lingua, l'estetica e l'ideologia (cf. Mazzucchelli 2015, 188-91). Un impegno politico e sociale anche maggiore rispetto agli esordi caratterizzò le opere degli anni della maturità, come la raccolta *Scammacchanat*, in cui pubblicò poesie di denuncia nei confronti della politica Reagan e della decisione di impiantare missili Cruise americani in una base Nato in Sicilia. Scammacca visse e lavorò nella sua villa di fronte al mare a Erice, in

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provincia di Trapani, dove gli facevano visita intellettuali, persone comuni e amici poeti, e dove ospitò per vari mesi Jack Hirschman, che avrebbe tradotto in inglese le poesie di un membro dell'Antigruppo, Santo Calì. Nelle sue stesse parole, Scammacca ha dichiarato di essere stato

> responsible for generating a remarkable series of populist poetry events and publishing milestones, expressions of the literary-artistic magnificence that survives and is nurtured in the three-pointed isle over which the Scirocco alone has maintained continuous sway. (1985, 93)

3.2 Dal British pop al 'beat italiano'

Una decina di anni dopo gli esordi letterari negli Stati Uniti, la Beat Generation provocò un flusso culturale transatlantico che ridisegnò le coordinate di poesia, letteratura e società in numerosi paesi europei. In Italia, questo fenomeno fornì alle culture giovanili una chiave di lettura del presente che provocò o giustificò stili di vita contrassegnati dal rifiuto dell'autoritarismo, del militarismo, del conformismo sessuale e degli atteggiamenti patriarcali in generale. Per questi motivi e per la sua associazione alle sottoculture della droga, quest'onda alternativa fu spesso screditata dai media, che fecero frequente uso dell'appellativo 'beat' o 'beatnik' in senso negativo, come stava accadendo anche negli Stati Uniti e nel Regno Unito (cf. Morgan 2010, 145; Ellis 2012, 148). Il termine originale e la sua deformazione erano molto diffusi e si prestarono anche ad altri usi poiché, tramite il pop inglese, si impose in Italia l'espressione 'beat italiano', che venne a identificare una tendenza che rivoluzionò la scena musicale dell'epoca. Il rapporto, musicale e letterario, con gli scrittori d'oltreoceano, è spiegato da un testimone diretto. Gli autori della Beat Generation

> avevano come colonna sonora il Be-bop, Charlie Parker, Dizzie Gillespie, era la cosa *hipster* dell'epoca [...]. È chiaro che ci fossero attinenze culturali e atteggiamenti libertari che andavano bene sia per la loro sia per la nostra generazione, a cominciare dall'uso delle droghe leggere, ma per il resto no. Perché quelli erano signori che avevano più di quarant'anni, e noi avevamo forti sospetti su chi aveva più di trent'anni. Però erano letture fondamentali, che ovviamente leggemmo. Non si potevano non leggere *On the Road* o *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. (Tarli 2007, 40)

Accadde anche che i due mondi si incontrassero, come nel caso di Kerouac, che nel tour promozionale per *Big Sur* condotto in Italia nel 1966 chiese di essere accompagnato da un musicista del movimento beat italiano, Gian Pieretti, i cui testi si occupavano di omosessualità, inquinamento ed emarginazione sociale. Tra le tante manifestazioni transculturali del

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termine ‘beat’,[15] le cosiddette Messe Beat italiane furono sicuramente uniche nel panorama internazionale. Marcello Giombini, un compositore noto per aver scritto le colonne sonore di alcuni *spaghetti western*, ebbe l’idea di adattare la musica liturgica allo stile del beat italiano per attrarre un maggior numero di giovani nelle chiese. La sua Messa Beat più famosa fu officiata a Roma nel 1966 e suscitò un grande interesse nei media e disapprovazione da parte della Chiesa. Il sacro e il profano si stavano incontrando in una traiettoria che sarebbe culminata con la stesura, da parte di Francesco Guccini, della canzone *Dio è morto*, i cui versi iniziali si ispirarono all’*incipit* di «Howl».[16] Il ruolo predominante di Ginsberg come punto di riferimento della controcultura anche musicale viene confermato da un gruppo italiano progressivo, i Living Music, che pubblicarono un disco nel 1972 (ristampato nel 2003) intitolato *To Allen Ginsberg*, in cui vennero messi in musica testi tratti da *Howl* insieme a un lavoro di ricerca sulle radici internazionali della musica (West Coast, India, jazz).

3.3 Il Beat 72 e Castelporziano

L’influenza pervasiva della poesia Beat, maggiore rispetto agli altri generi letterari praticati dagli autori del gruppo, oltre a fornire un’illusione di originalità e di successo a scrittori amatoriali e a suscitare l’interesse dei poeti citati, segnò un cambiamento epocale nel modo in cui la poesia veniva scritta e fruita. Ciò cominciò ad avvenire nell’arco del decennio che seguì le prime pubblicazioni dei poeti Beat in Italia, per prendere forma sempre più tangibile dopo la metà degli anni Settanta e raggiungere un apice in occasione del Primo Festival Internazionale dei Poeti di Castelporziano, che si svolse nel giugno del 1979.

Il cambiamento più significativo, come ha dichiarato la poetessa inglese Libby Houston con un’affermazione che può essere applicata all’Italia, è che «To Be a Poet» non andava più scritto con la maiuscola (cit. in Ellis 2012, 149). L’esempio estremo di questa tendenza, in Italia, si ebbe con un’antologia pubblicata nel 1978, intitolata *Dal fondo. Poesia dei marginali*. Citando Lautréamont, i curatori dichiaravano «tutti siamo poeti» e pubblicavano poesie «di eroinomani, di pazzi, di prostitute e prostituti, di omosessuali, di donne; poesie di bambini, cariche di solitudine e di sogni; poesie di militanti, di operai, di compagni ‘in crisi’» (Bordini, Veneziani 1978, 11, 16), scegliendo di identificare la maggior parte degli autori an-

15 In Italia la diffusione del termine raggiunse la cultura popolare, dai titoli di canzoni *Era un beatnick* [*sic*] (del gruppo Le Teste Dure), *L’abito non fa il beatnik* (di Evy), *Preghiera per un amico beat* (dei Bit-Nik) a un’improbabile ‘favola beat’ scritta da Renato Rascel (1967).

16 «Ho visto la gente della mia età andare via | lungo le strade che non portano mai a niente | cercare il sogno che conduce alla pazzia | nella ricerca di qualcosa che non trovano nel mondo» (cf. Tarli 2007, 235).

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tologizzati unicamente attraverso il loro nome di battesimo e dichiarando «stretti legami» con la poesia Beat (15).

Il 1968 era stato un punto di rottura non solo per le rivoluzioni studentesche, per la liberazione sessuale o per l'impegno politico. Aveva costituito una cesura anche per la poesia e per il ruolo che le si attribuiva. La diade poesia/rivoluzione aveva dichiarato la morte del primo elemento e poi la sua rinascita, e poiché la politica, il grande ombrello utopistico, aveva segnato il proprio fallimento, l'impossibilità «di poter spiegare ogni cosa con la categoria politica» portò a un «diffuso ritorno alla poesia» e «alla pratica della scrittura letteraria come strumento di resistenza» (Barbuto 1981, 12). La rinascita della poesia dalle proprie ceneri comportò una maggiore consapevolezza del rapporto col pubblico (cf. Berardinelli 1975; Barbuto 1981) accompagnata da un maggiore coinvolgimento fisico del poeta e da un ampliamento dello spettro tematico cui le era permesso accedere. Il caso citato dell'antologia *Dal fondo* è solo la punta dell'iceberg di una fervente attività di pubblicazioni poetiche: il femminismo, questioni di classe, la politica, il romanticismo ('la parola innamorata'), il corpo e il sesso furono tutti elementi che si insinuarono, dopo esser passati attraverso le dogane insieme ai libri Beat, nella poesia italiana, nelle raccolte dei giovani poeti e nelle innumerevoli antologie pubblicate negli anni '70.[17]

Le letture pubbliche di poesia, che divennero sempre più frequenti, ebbero come luogo d'elezione un circolo culturale romano il cui nome, Beat 72, fu scelto in chiaro omaggio agli autori americani, con il numero civico della strada in cui si trovava il club, nato a metà degli anni '60 non senza incontrare difficoltà. Agli inizi, come racconta il fondatore Ulisse Benedetti, la polizia faceva spesso visita al circolo e lo chiudeva. Benedetti subì diciassette processi, ma riuscì a mantenere aperto il locale («cercavano le molotov, ma trovavano solo cultura»), nel quale transitò la scuola romana di teatro prima e poi la post-avanguardia poetica. Intorno a quest'ultima gravitavano giovani alla ricerca di sé attraverso stimoli culturali, come ricorda una delle partecipanti: «eravamo imbevuti di cultura borghese che dovevamo spellarci per avere sensibilità maggiore nei confronti delle problematiche mondiali». E la poesia, che doveva essere «urlata come quella di Ginsberg», sembrava offrire la soluzione a tutto, «meglio della politica».[18]

17 Esula dallo spazio del presente saggio un ulteriore approfondimento delle pubblicazioni dell'epoca, nonché delle caratteristiche di maschilismo – o comunque di assenza, specialmente in un primo periodo, di figure femminili beat – rilevate in passato dalla critica. Non si possono, però, non richiamare le attività editoriali, giornalistiche e culturali nel senso più ampio del termine di Biancamaria Frabotta, Nadia Fusini, Mariella Gramaglia, Mariella Bettarini, Riccardo Duranti, Tomaso Kemeny, Giancarlo Pontiggia, per citare solo alcuni tra i più noti e influenti intellettuali che curarono antologie della giovane poesia americana o italiana, specialmente presso case editrici come Savelli, Newton & Compton, Gammalibri e Feltrinelli.

18 Ringrazio Donatella Orecchia per le preziose informazioni sul suo progetto di storia orale del teatro, parte del progetto Ormete, nell'ambito del quale ho potuto consultare le registra-

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In questo circolo prese forma un'iniziativa che avrebbe portato a un leggendario festival di poesia sulla spiaggia di Castelporziano, vicino Roma. Dopo una serie di letture di poesie *in loco*, Simone Carella e Franco Cordelli (che avrebbero poi dato alle stampe resoconti del festival), decisero di organizzarne una di più ampio respiro, in riva al mare. Ne risultò un incontro successivamente definito una Woodstock della poesia, in cui un nutrito numero di poeti da varie parti del mondo si confrontarono con il pubblico recitando da un palco allestito sulla sabbia. In uno stile molto simile all'*happening*, le improvvisazioni ebbero un ruolo fondamentale, e il pubblico, che la prima sera fu abbastanza scarso, nella terza e ultima sera aveva superato le diecimila presenze. Insieme ai poeti si appropriavano del microfono anche contestatori, autori dilettanti e giovani sotto l'effetto della marijuana. Non mancarono altre sostanze più autoctone, ovvero ettolitri di vino e un grande minestrone collettivo distribuito gratuitamente (un quotidiano titolava «minestrone contro poesia»),[19] in un *be-in* parzialmente ripreso nel documentario di Andrea Andermann *Castelporziano. Ostia dei poeti*.[20] Dario Bellezza, Maria Luisa Spaziani, Dacia Maraini si alternarono sul palco a colleghi internazionali e a una significativa rappresentanza di scrittori Beat, tra cui William Borroughs, Ted Joans, Brion Gysin e Anne Waldman. Per timore delle contestazioni, Diane di Prima esitò a lungo prima di leggere una poesia sui sandinisti, mentre Ginsberg, anche grazie a un momento di meditazione, riuscì a catturare l'attenzione del pubblico. Suscitarono molto interesse Orlovsky, che lesse la sua «America, give a shit» e Amiri Baraka, che contrassegnò la sua partecipazione con un ritmo di lettura assai sostenuto. Corso e Ferlinghetti fecero omaggio all'Italia, il primo leggendo «Italian Extravaganza», il secondo «Old Italians Dying». Poco dopo la lettura dell'ultima poesia il palco crollò, prestandosi così a una lettura metaforica della fine di un'epoca in cui «pace, amore e poesia» (cf. Carella et al. 2015), insieme a nudità, residui della cultura hippy, natura incontaminata e libertà di espressione avevano segnato un'intera generazione di poeti e di pubblico.

zioni dalle quali cito in questo paragrafo, conservate presso la Discoteca di Stato a Roma.

19 Altri titoli di quotidiani sono rivelatori di come venisse percepito l'evento. «Tutti i ragazzi sognano di diventare veri poeti»; «Una Woodstock in rima sulle zattere»; «Tra poesia e pubblico chi fa più spettacolo?»; «Happening e versi per tre giorni in riva al mare»; «Alla Nashville della poesia in scena i grandi del mondo»; «Tra spinelli e minestroni qualche barlume di poesia»; «Hanno scritto poesia sulla sabbia»; «Gran finale con crollo di palco» (cf. Carella et al. 2015, 155).

20 Al Festival Corso, Ferlinghetti e Ginsberg entrarono in contatto con il fotografo Enzo Eric Toccaceli, che ha recentemente curato una mostra dedicata ai tre poeti, allestita allo GNAM di Roma (febbraio-aprile 2018), intitolata *Beat Generation. Ginsberg, Corso, Ferlinghetti. Viaggio in Italia*. La mostra presentava una vasta scelta di fotografie dei tre artisti fatte da Toccaceli tra il 1979 e il 2000, oltre a molti ritagli stampa ed edizioni dei loro libri in italiano.

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La littérature dite sabir
Regards coloniaux divers sur l'Autre

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Abstract From the end of the 19th century, the French colonisation of Maghreb saw the birth of a cultural production deeply rooted in its historical-geographical context, characterised by a style and sometimes by contents that are essentially comic. These texts, which are often literary in nature, mostly illustrate the colonial world. They are written in Pataouète, the common language, the Patois of the Algerian French or, at least, they bear some resemblance to it. The remaining texts, which are the particular subject of this article, instead, consist of so-called 'Sabir literature', taking the form of texts describing the colonial Other, which is mainly Arabic. This 'Sabir literature' gives voice to the colonial Other in an idiom that is very different from French but that derives from it, also in its local form, although in what is, in essence, imprecise, sounding like caricature – the Sabir, being a French badly understood and badly spoken language by less-educated Arabic-speakers in their relationships with the French-speakers. This paper aims to give an account, as complete as possible, of these texts and of their essential features, while providing a general overview of the so-called literature in Sabir, which is a typical part of the Pieds-Noirs culture.

Keywords Sabir. Littérature sabir. Lingua franca. Fables & Contes. Kaddour. Kaddour ben Nitram.

1 Prémisses

Lingua franca, pidgin, petit-nègre, sabir, pseudo-sabir… et créole presque (pour certains).[1] La confusion, parfois, est et a été grande sous le ciel linguistique de la Méditerranée et, par conséquent, la situation excellente pour la recherche.

Cela considéré, un certain nombre de précisions, distinguos et justifications, se rendent nécessaires, quant à ce travail et à son titre.

1 Aslanov (2012, §§ 31, 39, 40) rend moins strictes que de coutume les critères qui les définissent et peut parler ainsi, pour la *Lingua franca*, de créole et créolisation.

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Tout d’abord, ceci n’étant que le premier volet d’une recherche qui en comporte plusieurs autres, je me limiterai ici à : faire le point sur le problèmes de classement des données, en choisissant un modèle de classement linguistique qui cherche à être simple, exhaustif, cohérent ;[2] dresser le tableau d’ensemble des données nouvellement acquises pour la constitution du corpus ; présenter de manière synthétiques les premiers résultats de son analyse. Car, pour reprendre les mots exemplaires de Schuchardt, le pionnier des études de créolistique :

> tout travail est scientifique quand et s’il se pose comme but celui de déterminer l’étendue et la nature d’un phénomène, d’éliminer les fausses croyances qui y sont associées, de lui attribuer la place qu’il mérite et qui est la sienne dans un ensemble plus large de phénomènes. (Schuchardt [1909] 2009, 7-8 ; traduction de l’Auteur)

Le titre, en effet, réunit plusieurs idées reçues ou largement partagées selon lesquelles il existe une littérature en sabir (une ‘littérature de fantaisie’ la définit Perego),[3] vu que d’un côté les textes en question ont souvent des formes ouvertement littéraires et que, de l’autre, la langue de ces textes est une sorte de français déformé communément désigné, au moins pendant la première moitié du XXe siècle, comme *sabir*. L’adjectif ‘colonial’, d’autre part, se justifie parce que patrie directe et patrie immanente où se réalise cette littérature – ou indirecte, détachée, lorsque les textes en sabir se concrétisent en France par des Pieds-Noirs à l’émigration anticipatrice – ce sont des territoires (l’Algérie et la Tunisie) au statuts juridico-politiques différents (départements, protectorat), mais schématiquement et sommairement perçus dans l’opinion courante occidentale comme ayant représenté somme toute des colonies.[4]

La qualification de ‘littérature’ peut aussi paraître imprécise ou disproportionnée, vu que le plus souvent, en parlant de textes sabir, on ne se réfère qu’à deux textes seuls : *Les sabirs de Kaddour ben Nitram et Fables & contes (en sabir)*, par Kaddour.

Parfois on les confond jusqu’à en faire un seul livre ; parfois on les distingue, tout en croyant à l’existence d’un seul Kaddour auteur des deux

2 Selon le critère d’empiricité de l’analyse, préconisé par Hjelmslev [1943] 1968, 14.

3 « Ce sabir a donné lieu à toute une littérature de fantaisie : il y a des disques en sabir, des fables sabir, etc. exclusivement du genre comique, ce comique n’étant naturellement perceptible que par les francophones » (Perego 1968, 602).

4 Ce n’est qu’au tout début de la domination française, entre 1830 et 1848, que l’Algérie a été une colonie.

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livres ;[5] car l'intérêt exclusivement linguistique ou culturel qu'on leur porte s'arrête à la surface des énoncés ou de l'ensemble du texte comme à des entités autosuffisantes, tout au plus prises en charge, en aval de leur production, par un contexte, par un marché linguistico-culturel : les deux textes étant considérés, par manque d'une perspective littéraire, comme détachés à tout jamais de leurs instances d'énonciation.[6]

D'autres fois on cite aussi – ou seulement – des fragments (mots, phrases, échanges de répliques) en sabir, parsemés dans des textes différents – mémoires, récits de voyageurs – qui ne les font figurer qu'en passant, souvent pour faire couleur locale.[7] Il est très rare de voir cités, et si cela arrive ce n'est que de manière expéditive, une paire d'autres auteurs, comme Dominus (mais exclusivement en tant qu'acteur de cabaret en sabir) et Jacques Muracciole.[8] Ces textes cependant sont bien plus nombreux : j'en ai trouvé et inventorié, après bien des années de recherches, au moins une vingtaine, pour ne m'en tenir qu'aux plus

5 L'équivoque n'est plus possible : car, si d'un côté l'on sait positivement que Kaddour ben Nitram (pseudonyme du Français Eugène-Edmond Martin : cf. *infra*) est né en 1888, la plus ancienne édition connue maintenant des *Fables& Contes en sabir* (celle découverte – apparemment – par moi et que je cite ici), date de 1898 : manifestement, KBN ne peut pas en être l'auteur. Par le passé, la critique se référait tout au plus à une édition de 1920 de Kaddour ou à d'autres plus récentes ; cela rendait possible la méprise sur l'identité unique, bien que, rien qu'à lire les préfaces des deux ouvrages, l'on voit de manière non équivoque que l'on a affaire à deux milieux distincts, séparés : Alger pour Kaddour, Tunis pour Kaddour ben Nitram.

6 Tombent dans le piège de l'identité apparemment unique : Tobi (2012, 368) ; Siblot (1985, 117) qui manifeste quand même quelques réticences à ce sujet, puisqu'il dit : « On donne d'ordinaire pour auteur des fabliers les plus connus (*Les Sabirs*, Tunis l93l ; *Fables et contes en Sabir*, Alger s.d,) un universitaire français, Martin » ; encore le même Siblot (s.d., § 3.3) et Beltaïef (2015, 257). L'existence de deux auteurs distincts est par contre certaine pour Cifoletti (2004, 287), qui d'ailleurs ne cite que les deux Kaddour comme exemples de sabir du XXe siècle. Le travail de Paul Siblot, plus de trente ans durant, a été et est de loin les plus important pour les études sur la culture de l'Algérie coloniale, surtout dans tous ses aspects linguistiques. Il ne m'est pas possible d'en tenir compte autant qu'il le faudrait dans cet article : je me bornerai donc à m'y référer parfois, quitte à le discuter de manière plus ample dans un article à venir. Cf. Siblot 1985, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 2002, s.d.

7 Par exemple, l'intéressant article de Chaulet Achour (2013) prend en considération différentes formes linguistiques/langagières maghrébines reliées à ou dérivées du français et utilisées à des fins comiques, telles que la *lingua franca*, le pataouète, le français des banlieues dit aussi 'français beur'. La seule forme qui passe presque sous silence, en se trouvant réduite à quelques rares énoncés cités, c'est justement le sabir, dont toutes les citations, majeures ou mineures, ne consistent qu'en quelques lignes.

8 Cf. Miliani (2009, 18) et Miliani (2008, 92) – mais surtout leur source : Cluny (1945, 3-4) – pour Dominus et d'autres artistes de cabaret (par exemple : Roger Prégor), desquels on ne devrait avoir que quelques enregistrements sonores. Il s'y trouve aussi une liste brève mais intéressante d'auteurs/chanteurs français/pieds-noirs de la première moitié du XXe siècle. Cf. Tobi (2012, 368-71) pour Kaddour ben Nitram et Jacques Muracciole, cité comme son rival artistique ; cf. aussi : Mechri-Bendana (1992, 285). Voir Kaddour ben Nitram (1952, 149-55), pour les quarante-cinq disques qu'il a lui-même enregistrés de 1927 à 1952.

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importants, sans compter les matériaux sonores (disques anciens 45 et 33 tours ou modernes à enregistrement numérique). Dugas (2003, 143), en se référant à la littérature des Français d’Algérie tout entière, à celle des Kaddour (en sabir), aussi bien qu’à celle des Brua et des Musette, qui écrivent dans le parler populaire (le pataouète), considère l’hypothèse qu’il puisse s’agir réellement, ou qu’il aurait pu s’agir, d’une vraie littérature, d’« une littérature neuve », dans la mesure où il y avait autrefois, ou il aurait pu y avoir, un « peuple neuf ».[9]

Qu’il s’agisse là vraiment de sabir, c’est finalement un point qui doit être discuté attentivement, pour démêler l’écheveau de définitions contradictoires, bien qu’elles concernent moins le terme de sabir lui-même (sur lequel le consensus s’est fait au moins parmi les linguistes) que l’ensemble des réalités linguistiques véhiculaires ou coloniales qui ont vu les jour sur les bords de la Méditerranée – surtout méridionale – et dans les territoires du Maghreb.

La seule chose bien certaine, pour et dans cette littérature dite sabir, reste la présence de l’Autre colonial, même si souvent elle est déguisée, camouflée par l’écran de la fiction énonciative, qui le remplace par des substituts métaphoriques animaliers.

2 La *Lingua franca*

S’il ya un écheveau terminologique à démêler, il est plus aisé d’adopter la perspective historique et de considérer, comme point de départ, la Méditerranée du XVIe siècle. À l’origine, ou tout d’abord, en tout cas auparavant, il y a eu la *Lingua franca*, terme qui fait problème, même si l’on ne tient pas compte de son acception commune, généralisée, qui en fait simplement un synonyme de ‘langue véhiculaire’.[10]

Quand est-ce qu’elle apparaît ? Où ? En quoi consiste-t-elle ? Contre ceux – assez nombreux – qui la feraient remonter au XIIIe siècle et aux

9 Les auteurs pataouètes ne reculent pas devant le sabir : leurs textes en contiennent des échantillons, plus ou moins courts, voire des de simples répliques citées ; cf. Paul Achard, *Salaouetches*, 1941 ; Edmond Brua, *Fables bônoises*, 1938, etc.). Encore chez Edmond Brua ([1942] 2012. « La Parodie du Cid ». *Œuvres soigies*. Nice : Éd. Jacques Gandini), toutes les répliques du personnage arabe de Fatma, le seul de la pièce, sont en sabir : voir les pages 56-9, 91-3, 139-42, 154. Par ailleurs ils ne dédaignent pas d’importer dans leur langue et leur littérature le genre majeur de l’autre versant de la culture pieds-noirs et de s’essayer eux aussi à la fable, mais en pataouète : cf. Lafourcade, Louis [1943]. *Harmonies bônoises*, Alger : Baconnier Frères, 19-20 ; Bus, Otto [s.d. 1961 ?]. *Moi et Augu. Histoires bônoises*. s.l. [Bône ?] : s.é. [Imprimerie Centrale ?], 18.

10 Pour une première approche des travaux sur la *Lingua franca*, voir en outre : Aslanov (2006, 16-26), Aslanov (2010, 2012), Camus Bergareche (1993), Cifoletti (2004), Dakhlia (2008), Minervini (1996), Schuchardt ([1909] 2009), Venier (2016).

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Croisades, d'un côté, et de l'autre étendraient son influence, sa pratique, jusqu'à la Méditerranée orientale, actuellement les chercheurs les plus prudents et documentés préfèrent la situer sur les territoires des régences barbaresques (Alger, Tunis, Tripoli), de 1516 (conquête d'Alger par Arrouj Barberousse) à 1830 (conquête française de l'Algérie). Queffélec (2005, 281), par un synonyme, appelle *franco* « le véhiculaire interethnique utilisé en Méditerranée occidentale à l'époque de la piraterie barbaresque », rejoignant idéalement ainsi ce que Cifoletti (2004, 77) décrit sous le nom de *lingua franca barbaresca*. Il précise :

> Le témoignage de nos textes montre que le franco est utilisé par la plupart des composantes ethniques des capitales barbaresques :[11] on le voit employé entre une autochtone juive […] et les chrétiens […], entre une Morisque […] et ses esclaves européens, entre un Renégat, général des galères, et son esclave chevalier espagnol […], entre le gardien du Bain et les captifs chrétiens […]. Même les femmes turques, pourtant souvent confinées chez elles et donc moins exposées au plurilinguisme, peuvent parler le franco[…]. Parallèlement, lorsque ce sont les Turcs qui sont captifs dans les pays chrétiens, c'est en langue franco que l'on s'adresse à eux […]. L'extension du franco est telle qu'il est même promu au rang de langue liturgique des catholiques d'Alger […]. Le franco est donc bien langue véhiculaire. (Queffélec 2005, 290)

Si Cifoletti (2004, 77) admet aussi, pour le reste de l'aire méditerranéenne et à peu prés dans la même période, l'existence d'un autre forme de langue véhiculaire (la *lingua franca mediterranea*), Aslanov (cité dans Queffélec 2005, 281-2), pour la Méditerranée orientale préfère supposer, faute de documents, moins l'existence d'un autre véritable pidgin que de « phénomènes de bigarrures et d'interférences entre langues apparentées (français, italien, judéo-espagnol à l'époque moderne) ou entre langues romanes et environnement linguistique alloglotte (arabe, grec, turc) ».

Un seul exemple – bien connu – sur tous de ce sabir, pourrait être le suivant, tiré du texte le plus important parmi ceux qui nous ont légué les témoignages de la véritable *Lingua franca* (*barbaresca*) : la *Topografía e historia general de Árgel* de Diego de Haedo (1616). Lorsqu'un esclave chrétien est malade et ne peut travailler, on l'aiguillonne en l'apostrophant de la sorte :

11 Aslanov (2012) préfère mettre l'accent sur le fait que la *Lingua franca* était destinée au contact entre « les locuteurs de diverses langues romanes séjournant volontairement ou non dans les États barbaresques […], mis en contact par les aléas du négoce, de la guerre ou de la captivité. […] » et n'était pas destinées à la communication entre musulmans et chrétiens, vu aussi la quantité assez négligeable d'éléments arabes, turcs ou berbères qu'elle contient (sans pour autant les exclure). « Manifestement, la langue franque du Maghreb était un système à géométrie variable oscillant entre l'espagnol et l'italien ».

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> Assi, assi, hora estar bueno, mira cane como hazer malato […] A cosí, acosí, mirar como mí estar barbero bono, y saber curar, si estar malato, y ora correr bono. Si cane dezir dole cabeça, tener febre no poder trabajar, [… mi] saber como curar, a fe de Dio abrusar vivo, trabajar, no parlar que estar malato. (Cité dans Cifoletti 2004, 198-99 et dans Perego 1968, 599)

3 Sabir (pidgin)

3.1 Qu'est-ce que réellement que le sabir ?

Les sabirs sont des types de langues issus d'un contact entre deux ou plusieurs langues et nés d'un besoin d'intercompréhension (à distinguer donc des langues nées simplement de la contamination par une autre, ou qui ne font que satisfaire à un besoin d'intercompréhension mais ne sont pas mixtes) ; des langues dont on fait un usage bilatéral et conscient. En particulier,

> les auteurs paraissent s'accorder en général pour appeler « sabir » un mélange de différentes langues romanes, de grec, d'arabe et de turc en usage dans les ports méditerranéens. Le type même du sabir est donc la 'langue franque'. Nous prendrons ici ce terme dans son sens étroit. Beaucoup de linguistes, en effet, ont l'habitude d'appeler *lingua franca* toute langue de relation. (Perego 1968, 597-8)

Avec l'occupation de l'Algérie de la part des Français (1830), les choses vont évoluer rapidement :

> Trente ans plus tard il ne reste plus grand-chose de la langue franque et surtout le sabir a cessé d'être bilatéral. Il est, dès la fin du XIXe siècle, réservé aux arabophones et […] berbérophones. En effet, les autres non francophones, Italiens, Espagnols, etc. et même Maltais […], vont s'efforcer de parler dans le langage populaire ambiant, qu'ils contribueront d'ailleurs à former et à enrichir. Ils ne tenteront en aucun cas d'utiliser le sabir dans leurs rapports avec les autochtones, et apprendront plutôt l'arabe, au besoin. Ce qu'on continuera alors à appeler sabir n'est plus que le français mal compris et mal parlé par les arabophones des classes les moins éduquées, et utilisé unilatéralement dans leurs rapports de tous ordres avec les francophones […] il ne vient à l'idée d'aucun francophone en Afrique du Nord de s'exprimer normalement en sabir. (Perego 1968, 602-3)

Ces sabirs modernes, qui ne sont plus de vrais sabirs, Perego (1968, 604) propose de les appeler pseudo-sabirs : des « parlers unilatéraux, résultats

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LI CORBEAU Y LI CHACAIL

[FABLE IMITÉE DE LA FONTAINE]

On jor j'y bromini bor en bas di ravin,
Ji mi souit embiti, comme one crote di pain ;
I fisit one chalor qui ji dit dropicale,
Pit être ti dira : ji mi fot pas mal.
Bas-di-tout mon zami, barc' qui cit chalor
I m'a fi voir one chos' itonnante ma paror.
Ji t'a dit qui fi chaud, i bor cit rison,
Dissous on gran zebboudj (1), ji cochi por di bon.
Pendant qui ji dormi vos en avi di bites,
Qui por pas s'ennuyer, i fisi la causite,
Ji livi mon la tite, i ji voir bor en haut,
On zoizeau noir ; ji crois vos apil on corbeau ?
I tini dans sa bouche on morceau di grouyire.
Os qui l'a ramassi, ça ni pas vot affire ;
I bien ! por moi aussi, c'it tot à fit igal.
Ma ci pa ça qui dit, on citoyen chacail
Qui son basi par là, fic on barbe di sapor,

(1) Olivier.

Migre, grili, fartasse (1), comme one tite di mort.
Il marchi, il alli bor divant, bor darrière,
Enfin ji crois, por dios, qui senti la grouyère.
Il marchi docement, i son fi di grimace,
I livi son chapeau ji voir son tite fartasse.
— « Oh ! Oh ! iatek salem (2), ia sidi corbeau ;
» Comme vos ites joli, comme vos ites beau,
» I ji crois divini rien qu'à vot gibus,
» Qui ton chimise i sort di la mison Pirtus.
(Regardant le fromage)
» Vos l'avi t'achiti, chi mon zami Folco ?
» Ji crois qui vot viston y sort di chi Gerbeau. »
Li corbeau ripond pas, i moque di cit crapoul.
Li chacail dit chouia (3), j'vas ti torni la boule.
I ritourn' i loui dit : « Ji crois vo chanti bien
» On dit qui t'a zone voix ! ! Qui vos ite mousicien ! !
» Chanti nous Zozifine, ou la Pitite Anglise,
» Ma ji vos en souplie, chante pas la Marseillise. »
Li corbeau i l'acoute, i bor fir son malin
I lâche son cascroute, qui tombi dans l'ravin.
Li chacail i courir, i l'attrape aussitôt
I si sauve en corant, plous vite qu'on chameau.
Avant i si ritourne, li voyant tot en larmes,
I loui dit : « Ji mi sauve, barc' qui vian li gendarmes.

MORALE

Si jordhui por demain, ti saura gobernor,
Jami di criv' la faim ti bisoan d'avoir por.
Barcani (4), ti diras : « Citoyen di corage
» Va sarcher di corbeau si ti veux di tromage. »

(1) Teigneux.
(2) Bonjour.
(3) Tout-à-l'heure.
(4) Laisse-moi.

Le corbeau et le chacal
(fable imitée de La Fontaine)

Un jour que je me promenais en bas du ravin,
Je me suis cuit (brûlé) comme un croûton de pain
Il faisait une chaleur que j'appellerais tropicale,
Tu diras peut-être que tu t'en fous pas mal.
Mais pas du tout, mon ami ! parce que cette chaleur
M'a fait voir une chose étonnante, ma parole !
Je t'ai dit qu'il faisait chaud, et pour cette raison
Sous un grand olivier, je me suis couché pour de bon.
Pendant que je dormais, il y a eu des bêtes,
Qui pour ne pas s'ennuyer, faisaient la causette,
J'ai levé la tête, et j'ai vu en haut,
Un oiseau noir ; je crois qu'on l'appelle un corbeau.
Il tenait dans sa bouche un morceau de gruyère.
Où qu'il l'a ramassé, ce ne sont pas vos affaires ;
Eh ben ! pour moi aussi, c'est tout à fait égal.
Mais c'est pas ce que dit, un citoyen chacal
Qui passait par là, avec une longue barbe de sapeur,
Maigre, grêle, teigneux, comme une tête d'un mort,
Il marche, il va par devant, il va par derrière,
Finalement, je crois, il flaire le gruyère.
Il marche lentement, il fait une grimace,
Il ôte son chapeau et je vois sa tête teigneuse.
- « Oh ! Oh ! Bonjour, monsieur le corbeau ;
« Comme vous êtes joli, comme vous êtes beau !
« Je crois deviner , rien qu'à voir votre gibus,
« Que ta chemise elle sort de la Maison Pirtus.
(Regardant le fromage)
« Vous l'avez acheté chez mon ami Folco ?
« Je crois que votre veste, elle sort de chez Gerbeau. »
Le corbeau ne répond pas, il se moque de cette crapule.
Le chacal dit, tout à l'heure je vais te faire tourner la boule.
Il revient et il lui dit : « Je crois que vous chantez bien
« On dit que t'a une voix ! Que vous êtes musicien !!
« Chantez-nous Joséphine, ou la Petite Anglaise,
« Mais je vous en supplie, ne chante pas la Marseillaise. »
Le corbeau il l'écoute, et pour faire le malin
Il lâche son casse-croûte, qui tombe dans le ravin.
Le chacal il court, il l'attrape aussitôt
Il se sauve en courant, plus vite qu'un chameau.
Avant il se tourne, et le voyant tout en larmes,
Il lui dit : « Je me sauve parce que viennent les gendarmes. »

MORALE

Si aujourd'hui ou demain, tu seras gouverneur,
Jamais de crever de faim tu ne dois avoir peur.
Laisse-moi te dire : « Citoyen, du courage !
« Va chercher du corbeau, si tu veux du fromage. »

Figure 1. Kaddour, 1898, Fables & Contes en Sabir, Alger : Impr. artistique Ch. Zamith, 9-10 (C'est moi qui traduis de manière presque littérale)

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d’efforts faits par des individus ou des groupes d’individus pour reproduire, lorsque le besoin s’en fait sentir, une langue à prestige social supérieur dans une situation sonnée » : en fait, ces locuteurs ne se représentent pas ces parlers comme des échecs sur le plan linguistique, mais comme des tentatives plus ou moins bien réussies.[12]

Restent finalement à écarter de notre examen les deux termes de créole et de pidgin. Le premier parce que les créoles ne sont pas des langues véhiculaires mais des langues naturelles, maternelles et que, tout étant d’origine coloniale eux aussi, ils n’ont pas partagé les mêmes espaces géo-historiques que les sabirs. Le pidgin parce que, en tant que synonyme ou presque de sabir, il présente en grande partie les mêmes caractéristiques intralinguistiques (grammaticales, lexicales, phonétiques) et sociolinguistiques, mais relativement à d’autres aires ou époques et avec « une richesse relative plus grande, à tous les niveaux » (Thibault 2011, § 2.1).

C’est surtout son histoire qui rend le pidgin différent du sabir : s’il y a deux termes pour désigner des réalités linguistiques en principe semblables, cela est dû à des raisons historico-culturelles. Des chercheurs de langues et cultures différentes se sont employés à décrire des faits linguistiques, liés à la colonisation ou à la rencontre avec l’Autre chez lui, très semblables, mais distants géographiquement et mettant en cause comme origine- ou facteurs - des langues occidentales appartenant à des familles linguistiques distinctes (romanes pour les sabirs, anglo-saxonnes pour les pidgins). Finalement, à la différence des sabirs, le vocabulaire d’un pidgin n’est pas composite (comme pour la *Lingua franca*), mais principalement tiré d’une seule langue européenne.[13]

12 Aujourd’hui on appellerait plutôt une *interlangue* les productions des apprenants d’une langue étrangère (cf. Thibault 2011, § 1). Outre le sabir moderne d’Afrique du Nord, ce sont des pseudo-sabirs les diverses variétés de ‘petit-nègre’ (Perego 1968, 604).

13 C’est « le cas des variétés de *pidgin-English,* ou du français populaire d’Abidjan dans ses formes les plus éloignées de la norme » (Thibault 2011, § 2.1). Perego (1968, 604-605) précise que « les pidgins proviennent de pseudo-sabirs à base anglaise [...], mais devenus bilatéraux . Ils sont utilisés, en effet, soit entre Européens et habitants du pays, soit entre locuteurs de dialectes indigènes différents ».

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3.2 Le pseudo-sabir

Le sabir, ou plutôt le sabir moderne ou pseudo-sabir,[14] dans la réalité communicationnelle n'a pas d'atouts : il a eu tous les handicaps possibles et son sort peu propice était inscrit dans ses gènes, dès sa naissance. Toutefois, ici il ne s'agira plus de traiter du sabir d'un point de vue strictement linguistique, mais plutôt d'envisager l'idée de faire gouverner le plan linguistique par l'instance d'une esthétique littéraire et de l'y installer dans une position dominante.

Avec Perego (1968, 602-4) et Martinet (1968-70, 8), nous devons définir la langue de ces textes un pseudo-sabir, puisqu'elle est unilatérale dans sa situation d'énonciation : il n'y a qu'un seul sujet, écrivant (et non pas un sujet parlant, en plus), qui même dans les dialogues (écrits et/ou récités) met en scène un seul sujet parlant ce sabir, ou bien il n'y a qu'un seul sujet écrivant qui en fait la langue de tout le texte.

On voit bien que, avec « Li corbeau y li chacail » et les autres fables, on a affaire à des textes de fiction et de fiction littéraire : de plus, ou ce qui est 'pire', ce sujet parlant/écrivant n'appartient pas à la communautés des locuteurs de ce pseudo-sabir, tels qu'il les met en scène. Il fait partie des autres : de ces sujets qui mettent le pseudo-sabir en position de minorisation, qui se refusent de le parler et qui généralement s'en moquent comme d'un langage, ou plutôt d'un baragouin, grossier, maladroit, ridicule et dont on ne peut que rire. Le pseudo-sabir de ces textes est la principale ressource, l'instrument fondamental d'une caricature parfois méchante, d'autres fois plus débonnaire ou indulgente, qui vise à faire rire aux frais de toute une communauté d'individus et de sujets parlants, à travers leur caricature textuelle. Il est plus correct alors de l'appeler 'pseudo-sabir (unilatéral) de fiction', non authentique (ce n'est pas une langue spontanée qui vise la communication intersubjective) et en plus moqueur, caricatural.

Il y a des langues qui ont plus de chance que d'autres. Il y a les langues vivantes et les langues mortes. Il y a les langues dites majeures et les langues dites mineures, où la différence selon l'importance se joue non pas sur le plan intralinguistique (car pour la linguistique elles sont toutes majeures), mais sur le plan géo-historico-social : c'est l'extension des territoires de leur diffusion, le nombre des sujets qui les parlent ou qui les ont parlées et leur durée dans le temps qui déterminent cette importance. Et, bien sûr, l'importance du patrimoine culturel qu'elles ont su léguer à l'humanité tant qu'elles étaient en vie, d'une manière ou d'une autre : par exemple, grâce à une longue survie dans le domaine de l'écrit, après leur mort sur le plan de l'oral, après leur mort en tant que langues naturelles.

14 Dorénavant, lorsqu'il sera question de 'sabir' référé à la littérature en sabir et à ses textes (surtout en citant la littérature critique sur le sujet), en réalité il s'agira toujours de 'pseudo-sabir'.

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Le pseudo-sabir d’Afrique du Nord : une langue mineure ou encore moins, une presque ou une pseudo-langue, dont la présomption de mort a été déclarée suite à la fin de la société coloniale qui l’avait engendrée ; une langue non véritablement aimée, voire méprisée maintenant parce que rejetée avec honte des communautés linguistiques qui étaient censées la parler ou l’utiliser jadis. En tout cas l’objet du mépris de l’interlocuteur ethniquement semblable, même de nos jours, lorsque celui-là a été assimilé linguistiquement et culturellement par la langue dominante et est, par exemple, un jeune ‘beur’ francisant de deuxième ou troisième génération :[15] rejetée maintenant en tant qu’emblème linguistique de la subordination et de l’aliénation coloniales d’autrefois, ou d’une inadéquation linguistique aujourd’hui. Au contraire, cette ‘langue’ était utilisée avec une certaine fierté par l’alloglotte qui parlait ce pseudo-sabir : tout en s’exprimant très mal en français, tout en le déformant et en le dénaturant, il n’éprouvait aucun sentiment de honte car il était persuadé de parler français : ce que la littérature dite sabir nous montre bien, bien que de manière abusive, sans en être investie légitimement.[16]

Cependant, le sabir, cet avorton, ce bâtard apparemment abandonné de tous, est aussi « une des plus justes peintures littéraires de l’Algérie coloniale » (Siblot 1993, 110). Il est vu de manière positive aussi lorsque, selon Merdaci, il entre faire partie de la langue nouvelle projetée par un écrivain tel que Henri Kréa : une langue qui, en préservant l’héritage linguistique français et méditerranéen, voit le « patalouette [sic] de Cagayous ou sabir de Kaddour-Mermet »[17] comme composantes nécessaires de la nouvelle langue de l’Algérie, langue présente et future : l’algérien, « différent du français dans la même mesure que l’américain est différent

15 Sur le (pseudo-)sabir comme langue de parents arabophones illettrés, immigrés en France, et ayant du mal à communiquer avec leurs enfants, scolarisés et absolument francisants, voir par exemple : Fatmi-Sakri (2015).

16 De même, en Afrique sub-saharienne, il en allait avec ce français déformé, dénaturé, qu’était le français-tirailleur et il en va aujourd’hui avec le FPA (Français Populaire d’Abidjan), en Côte d’Ivoire, et en général avec le ‘petit français’; cf. Costantini (2008, 124).

17 C’est ainsi que l’appelle Georges Moussat, dans sa « Préface » au volume des *Fables & contes (en sabir)*, officiellement signé par Kaddour. Moussat nous donne par ailleurs les seuls renseignements sur l’auteur dont on semble disposer à ce jour, qui nous le montrent comme un professionnel de l’architecture : « Mermet a soigné ses fables comme il soigne ses mosquées et ses établissements diocésains : de jolies arabesques circulent à travers le texte et ne font que l’enjoliver ; on sent qu’on se trouve en présence d’un penseur de l’architecture, doublé d’un architecte de la pensée ». Dugas (2003, 136) parle des séances de récitation de ces textes en sabir, par Kaddour-Mermet, come de « récitals très courus, semble-t-il, par le public local », en faisant – même si sur le mode dubitatif (« semble-t-il » : et il ne fournit pas de sources à ce propos) – de Kaddour une sorte de professionnel du spectacle (à l’instar de Kaddour ben Nitram) ; alors que Moussat, qui est son ami, nous dit explicitement que Kaddour était un architecte qui, avec des amis, s’adonnait à la lecture de ses textes dans de « joyeuses réunions algériennes ».

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de l’anglais. Cette langue nouvelle est truffée d’hispanismes, de mots kabyles, arabes et italiens. La syntaxe même est plus proche de l’espagnol que du français » (H. Kréa cité dans Merdaci 2010, 165).

Il faut dire cependant que cette nouvelle langue, censée porter en elle-même les gènes (probables) du pataouète de Cagayous-Musette en plus de ceux (improbables) du ‘sabir’ de Kaddour, est à mon sens moins une réalité linguistique qu’un projet esthético-littéraire.

De cette nouvelle langue, l’algérien, Merdaci affirme que « Kréa en fera la démonstration dans son roman *Djamal* »(Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1961) ; en réalité, dans ce roman on ne trouve qu’un peu de mots et de répliques en pataouète çà et là, surtout vers la fin : pas plus qu’en beaucoup d’autres textes appartenant à la ‘littérature pataouète’, bien au contraire. De toute manière : aucune trace de sabir.

La fusion et le dépassement des deux composantes autochtones coloniales algériennes en la synthèse d’une nouvelle réalité narrative, est à rechercher moins du côté de l’expression, que de celui du contenu. Envisagé en amont (selon Merdaci) comme un facteur important dans un rêve d’intégration, le sabir se révèle à la fin être surtout un fantasme, le symbole d’un désir inassouvi. D’un côté il y a l’expression du roman, un français moyennement d’Algérie, de l’autre il y a le sujet, consacré en mesure dominante aux personnages arabes et mixtes. Issu d’un mariage mixte franco-arabe est Djamal, le héros éponyme et ‘mixte’ est aussi l’auteur, qui apparaît entièrement pris dans la dialectique ‘métaphore textuelle obsédante – mythe personnel’ : dialectique qui, en plus d’un échec esthétique personnel (peut-être inavoué), sur le plan historique se révélera une contradiction insoluble, qui amènera en 1962 (l’année d’après la publication du roman) à l’exode des Français de l’Algérie et, ensuite, amènera l’auteur à abandonner « son thème de prédilection du ‘bâtard historique’ » et l’espoir d’un métissage algérien, « métissage qu’il port [ait…] au plus profond de son être » (Merdaci 2010, 165).[18]

18 Kréa arrive même à imaginer dans l’intrigue du roman (se déroulant entre 1954 et 1958), pendant une sieste, un rêve prophétique (incrusté dans le texte, mais détaché du reste par l’italique), où le héros vit une scène historique future, située en 1970, et où lui est désormais un combattant pour la cause de l’Algérie Indépendante (Kréa 1961, 123-6). Dans cette scène onirico-prophétique, il imagine une issue à l’impasse de la contradiction coloniale qui est justement le contraire de ce qui adviendra : la conquête de la dignité et de la liberté de la part de la composante algérienne des colonisés se réalise grâce au départ de la plupart des Arabes, qui iront coloniser un Sahara transformé en « des vastes régions, désormais fertiles » grâce aux Nations Unies « qui avaient procédé à des explosions atomiques qui [... avaient] chassé cette masse d’air chaud qui faisait du Sahara un désert. […] Le grand exode allait commencer par l’évacuation des populations du Sahel, puis se terminer par la marche des habitants du bled et de la montagne » (126). En quelque sorte, et malgré les convictions intimes de l’auteur, l’aboutissement parfait d’une colonisation qui à la fin expulse l’élément indigène (pour lui trouver une nouvelle patrie bien meilleure, certes, mais ailleurs). L’appel à la science-fiction pour trouver la solution d’un drame historique, en dit long sur le pessimisme

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Or, il est et il sera question ici de cette langue ou plutôt des textes qu’elle nous a légués.[19] Ces textes, sauf quelques-uns, ne sont pas trop connus, voire ils ne sont pas connus du tout, même de la part des spécialistes. Par exemple, l’intéressant article de Christiane Chaulet Achour sur « Langue, Comique et Altérité,… de Molière à Aziz Chouaki » (2013) prend en considération différentes formes linguistiques / langagières maghrébines, reliées ou dérivées du français et utilisées à des fins comiques, telles que la *lingua franca*,[20] le pataouète, le français des banlieues dit aussi ‘français beur’. La seule forme qui, sans pour autant être passée entièrement sous silence (cf. 2013, 4-5), se trouve néanmoins réduite à quelques rares énoncés cités, c’est justement le ’sabir’, dont toutes les citations, majeures ou mineures, consistent seulement en quelques mots.

3.3 Un pseudo-sabir qui n’en est pas un

Un problème se manifeste de toute évidence, qui a rendu nécessaire l’établissement d’une définition simple, exhaustive et cohérente de ‘sabir’. Comme nous le rappelle Martinet :

> Il paraît difficile de tracer des limites nettes entre différents types de sabir : il n’y a guère de solution de continuité entre l’embryon de système de communication qui peut apparaître en quelques heures au contact de deux individus de langues différentes, et la *Lingua franca* qui, pendant des siècles, a servi aux contacts internationaux dans l’espace méditerranéen. (Martinet 1968-70, 6 ; italique dans l’original)

À les décrire sommairement, on pourrait dire que

> les caractéristiques essentielles [… du] sabir consistent dans le grossissement et la systématisation des déformations phonétiques courantes chez les arabisants s’exprimant en français, tant au niveau de certaines con-

rationnel, inconscient à la limite, sous-jacent au déploiement de la part de l’auteur de tant d’optimisme de la volonté.

19 Outre le sabir arabo-français dont il a été et il sera question ici, on a des témoignage sur l’existence d’un sabir francarabe : « tandis qu’en Algérie, on a eu un sabir à base française, fabriqué par les indigènes, le Maroc a vu naître un sabir à base arabe fabriqué par les Français. Résultat d’une différence d’attitude des Français en 1830 et en 1912 » (Brunot 1949, 460). Pour le francarabe voir aussi Miliani (2009, 18) ; pour le judéo-arabe (sabir à base d’arabe) de Tunis, voir Tobi (2012, 371-8).

20 L’utilisation à des fins comiques d’une *lingua franca* encore à un stade initial (ou dans sa déformation littéraire), ou bien d’une interlangue ou langue d’étranger, est signalée par Camus Bergareche (1993, 434, 436) dès les débuts du XIVe siècle et encore vers 1521.

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> sonnes : B au lieu de P (parti/barti,Paris/Baris...) ou F au lieu de V (afic/avec), que de certaines voyelles (I/U/OU). [... Le sabir]n'est rien d'autre que la somme des déformations, pour la plupart syntaxiques et phonétiques [...] du français usuel, tel qu'il est parlé dans telle ou telle région du globe et/ou par telle ou telle corporation. (Dugas 2003, 137, 142)[21]

Le nom de 'sabir' semble être utilisé volontiers à tort et à travers. Sous ce nom l'on trouve et l'on met des choses assez différentes dans leur aspect et fondamentalement divergentes dans leurs fonctions, par delà l'intention comique affichée. Les auteurs eux-mêmes qui signent, de leur nom ou par un pseudonyme, les textes de la littérature dite sabir, nous offrent sous cette étiquette des produits linguistiques appartenant à des 'langues' différentes. L'exemple le plus manifeste est constitué par Kaddour ben Nitram.

Kaddour ben Nitram (pseudonyme du Français Eugène-Edmond Martin, né à Tunis en 1888, fonctionnaire, homme de lettres et de spectacle) est l'auteur 'sabir' le plus connu, surtout parce que c'était une personne en chair et en os, comme dans les conférences données au public ; c'était aussi une voix à la radio de Tunis et dans ses quarante-cinq disques,[22] et un personnage célèbre comme 'travesti colonial' sur la scène, d'abord en amateur, ensuite en professionnel au cabaret.[23]

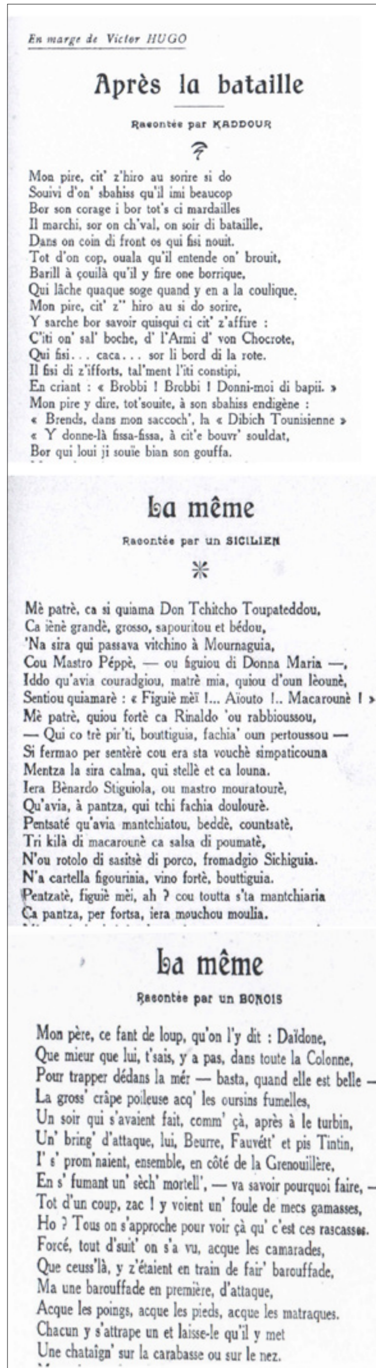
Déjà si l'on compare les livres des deux Kaddour, le Kaddour tout court, l'Algérien (alias Kaddour-Mermet), et Kaddour ben Nitram, le Tunisien, on s'aperçoit tout de suite qu'ils contiennent des textes très différents sur le plan linguistique : autant les textes algériens sont linguistiquement tout à fait homogènes, autant les tunisiens diffèrent et renvoient à des communautés de parlants distinctes, car sous le même nom de sabir on nous livre : « le sabir des arabophones musulmans, celui des Juifs de Tunis, le sabir particulier des Maltais, le sicilien (à peu près sans mélange), le langage populaire français de Bône, le français de Corse. Et personne n'y a trouvé à redire » (Perego 1968, 602). Ces textes sont assez souvent non pas en 'sabir', mais en une ou l'autre forme de pataouète, le parler pied-noir d'Alger et de sa région, plus en général le parler populaire des Français d'Algérie, voire la langue pratiquée dans tout le Nord de l'Afrique

21 Cf. aussi Siblot 1985, 118-20.

22 Cf. Kaddour ben Nitram 1952, 149-55.

23 Pour sa biographie et pour un bilan de son œuvre, fondamentaux sont les articles signés Mechri-Bendana 1992 et Kchir-Bendana 2003, 145-7 ; cf. aussi Beltaïef 2015, 256. Pour des témoignages sur sa personne et sur ses performances sur scène, voir : `http://maurice-darmon.blogspot.com/2009/04/jocelyne-dakhlia-la-lingua-franca.html`; Gurreri, Humbert, *Des nouvelles du Boukournine. Chroniques et légendes de Tunisie* ; `http://www.lycee-carthage.fr/Tunisie/photos/page01/BOU_KORNINE.pdf`.

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En marge de Victor HUGO

Après la bataille

Racontée par KADDOUR

Mon pire, cit' z'hiro au sorire si do
Souivi d'on' sbahiss qu'il imi beaucop
Bor son corage i bor tot's ci mardailles
Il marchi, sor on ch'val, on soir di bataille,
Dans on coin di front os qui fisi nouit.
Tot d'on cop, ouala qu'il entende on' brouit,
Barill à çouilà qu'il y fire one borrique,
Qui lâche quaque soge quand y en a la coulique.
Mon pire, cit' z'' hiro au si do sorire,
Y sarche bor savoir quisqui ci cit' z'affire :
C'iti on' sal' boche, d' l'Armi d' von Chocrote,
Qui fisi... caca... sor li bord di la rote.
Il fisi di z'ifforts, tal'ment l'iti constipi,
En criant : « Brobbi ! Brobbi ! Donni-moi di bapii. »
Mon pire y dire, tot'souite, à son sbahiss endigène :
« Brends, dans mon saccoch', la « Dibich Tounisienne »
« Y donne-là fissa-fissa, à cit'e bouvr' souldat,
Bor qui loui ji souïe bian son gouffa.

La même

Racontée par un SICILIEN

Mè patrè, ca si quiama Don Tchitcho Toupateddou,
Ca iènè grandè, grosso, sapouritou et bédou,
'Na sira qui passava vitchino à Mournaguia,
Cou Mastro Péppè, — ou figuiou di Donna Maria —,
Iddo qu'avia couradgiou, matrè mia, quiou d'oun lèounè,
Sentiou quiamarè : « Figuiè mèï !... Aïouto !.. Macarounè ! »
Mè patrè, quiou fortè ca Rinaldo 'ou rabbioussou,
— Qui co trè pir'ti, bouttiguia, fachia' oun pertoussou —
Si fermao per sentèrè cou era sta vouchè simpaticouna
Mentza la sira calma, qui stellè et ca louna.
Iera Bènardo Stiguiola, ou mastro mouratourè,
Qu'avia, à pantza, qui tchi fachia doulourè.
Pentsaté qu'avia mantchiatou, beddè, countsatè,
Tri kilà di macarounè ca salsa di poumatè,
N'ou rotolo di sasitsè di porco, fromadgio Sichiguia.
N'a cartella figourinia, vino fortè, bouttiguia.
Pentzatè, figuiè mèi, ah ? cou toutta s'ta mantchiaria
Ca pantza, per fortsa, iera mouchou moulia.

La même

Racontée par un BONOIS

Mon père, ce fant de loup, qu'on l'y dit : Daïdone,
Que mieur que lui, t'sais, y a pas, dans toute la Colonne,
Pour trapper dédans la mér — basta, quand elle est belle —
La gross' crâpe poileuse acq' les oursins fumelles,
Un soir qui s'avaient fait, comm' çà, après à le turbin,
Un' bring' d'attaque, lui, Beurre, Fauvétt' et pis Tintin,
I' s' prom'naient, ensemble, en côté de la Grenouillère,
En s' fumant un' sèch' mortell', — va savoir pourquoi faire, —
Tot d'un coup, zac ! y voient un' foule de mecs gamasses,
Ho ? Tous on s'approche pour voir çà qu' c'est ces rascasses.
Forcé, tout d'suit' on s'a vu, acque les camarades,
Que ceuss'là, y z'étaient en train de fair' barouffade,
Ma une barouffade en première, d'attaque,
Acque les poings, acque les pieds, acque les matraques.
Chacun y s'attrape un et laisse-le qu'il y met
Une chataîgn' sur la carabasse ou sur le nez.

Figure 2. Extraits des *Sabirs* de Kaddour ben Nitram (1931, 27-30)

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du Nord :[24] formes qui varient selon le pays d'origine des parlants que le texte 'en sabir' met en scène (Italie, France, Espagne). Les trois extraits cités ci-dessus, par exemple, représentent des échantillons de pseudo-sabir d'arabophone, de 'sabir' sicilien (un parler dialectal sicilien 'nord-africanisé', en réalité) et de langage populaire français (pataouète) de Bône.[25]

Ces textes alors ne sont pas ou plus des textes minorants, fruit d'une énonciation caricaturale, mais seulement des textes au contenu comique, qui affichent une diversité - mais non pas une infériorité - ethnique authentique, peut-être déjà en voie de disparition (que l'on revendique même avec attendrissement et nostalgie).[26] Cela explique que l'auteur et ses textes d'un côté jouissent encore d'une certaine considération et sympathie mémorielle en Tunisie, de l'autre qu'ils présentent un intérêt scientifique pour les linguistes, vu que ce sont pour la plupart des dialogues rapportés ou reconstruits et non pas des textes créés délibérément comme fiction littéraire.[27]

24 Voir Duclos et al. 1992, 163 ; Duclos 1992, 113-14 ; Vasquez 2004, 114 ; Moréno (1995, 199).

25 Kchir-Bendana (1995, 169-70) d'abord les définit tous des sabirs ; ensuite, cette fois correctement, elle parle de « la mosaïque de parlers et de jargons tunisois », « des différentes manières de s'exprimer des habitants de la ville » et « des amalgames langagiers en situation ». Kchir-Bendana (2003, 150), tout en continuant à utiliser le terme de 'sabir' selon l'acception commune, et non pas selon celle de la linguistique, dénombre avec précision quinze types de ces parlers, dont on voit carrément que certains sont des sabirs, tandis que d'autres ne le sont pas.

26 Il ne faut pas oublier que Kaddour ben Nitram est l'auteur d'une longue remémoration, sous forme de conférence (publiée par la suite), du Tunis du passé, de la fin du XIXe et première moitié du XXe siècles, rue par rue, magasin par magasin, personnage pittoresque par personnage pittoresque : Kaddour Ben Nitran, *Si Tunis m'était conté,* texte intégral de la conférence donnée le Samedi 22 mai, à 16.30, dans la Salle des Fêtes du Lycée Carnot de Tunis. S.l. : s.é. [Mémoire de Notre Temps]. 73 p.

27 Quelque chose de semblable sur le plan des résultats littéraires (des textes comiques) et de différent du point de vue linguistique a eu lieu en Égypte, à Alexandrie, à deux reprises. James Sanua (1875 et 1876) d'abord, Bernard de Zogheb (1968) ensuite, ont écrit et publié des pièces théâtrales comiques en 'sabir italien' : partiellement en sabir, dans le cas de Sanua (*Il marito infedele*, *L'aristocratica alessandrina*), où c'est surtout la domesticité de cette ville multiculturelle à s'exprimer en sabir italien ; totalement en sabir dans le cas de *Le Sorelle Brontë*, opéra comique de Zogheb (la seule publiée de dix libretti conservés). Sur James Sanua, cf. El Beih (2014), Sanua (2015) ; pour une analyse linguistique du sabir italien dans *Il Marito infedele*, voir l'intéressante P*ostface* de Venier (2015). Sur Bernard de Zogheb : cf. Halim (2010, 1, 3, 7, 12) et Mansel (2016, 300-1). Voici deux échantillons de ce 'sabir italien' à la créativité littéraire manifeste et à l'authenticité linguistique un peu (dans le premier cas) et assez (dans le deuxième) douteuse.

Sanua (1876, 63). Scena I (M.me Tamburon e Mustafa)

TAMB. *Le Monsieur Anglais* il signor anglese chi è arrivato a mezzo giorno è sorti u no ?
MUST. el mister Inglisi con el barba granda granda come el escopa, lui ancora in suo camera.

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Outre les différences morphosyntaxiques, lexicales et orthographiques de ces langues/parlers, qui ne sont pas des sabirs, par rapport au sabir des fables et contes algériens (pour simplifier : ceux de Kaddour vs certains de KBN), il y a un autre facteur déterminant qui les oppose : le sabir ou pseudo-sabir est une langue déformée (la française), dans la bouche d’un alloglotte (arabophone ou berbérophone), à qui on la fait façonner selon ses habitudes articulatoires ; au contraire, les soi-disant ‘sabirs sicilien, juif tunisien ou bônois’ de KBN, aussi bien que bien des textes de Manuel Galvadon (*Pour s’esclaffer de rire en société (histoires sabir)*, 1964), sont la langue quotidienne de sujets coloniaux parlant un dialecte ‘français’ d’Afrique du Nord, qui se ressent de l’origine géolinguistique de ses parlants.[28]

L’opposition fonctionnelle n’en saurait être plus nette : dans le premier cas on est devant une langue véhiculaire, utilisée pour communiquer en dehors de sa propre communauté linguistique d’appartenance, dans le deuxième il s’agit d’une langue maternelle et naturelle, utilisée par des sujets parlants à l’intérieur de leur propre communauté, aussi bien restreinte qu’élargie.

4 *Les Fables en sabir* : pour un premier bilan

Les fables en sabir (au moins celles de Kaddour) semblent répondre à deux sources fondamentales d’inspiration.

L’une vise à rendre typique sur le plan géographique, à régionaliser et à folkloriser ces fables, par un grand nombre de détails maghrébins ou

TAMB. lui mangé in camere *ou à Table d’Hôte* abasso ?
MUST. lui fatto mangheria dentro il camera e mangiato khamse bistek
(*aprendo la mano e mostrando le cinque dita a madama Tamburon*)
khamse bistek, cinco, cabisce madama ?
TAMB. *Très-bien*, *très-bien.*
MUST. el mister Inglisi, omo bellu, bellu, forte come un saldato. ah ! Se io sabere barlare in Ingliz, io brendere di lui un gran backscisce [*Nota :* mancia], ma lui barla boco taliano : io cabito tutto lui detto a me.
TAMB. *Tant mieux pour toi.*

Zogheb (1968, 13). I ATTO, Scena I (Nel Yorkshire […] Entrano BRIDZITT e TABBY. Parano tristi):

TABBY Che tristessa, morto il padrone, | E partito nel au-delà. | Non ha lacciato nella casa | Nemmeno le venti para. | BRIDZITT : Che tristessa, le tre bambini, | Emiglia, Anna, Carlotta, | Sono povari orphalini | Che non sanno fare nulla. | TUTTI E DUE Nulla, nulla non sanno fare, | E il fratello meno ancor, | Devrano andar lavorare | Nelle strate a fare l’amor.

28 « En réalité, il existe différents dialectes pataouètes d’une frontière à l’autre de l’Algérie colonisée » (Dugas 2003, 140).

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algérois/algériens, mais de manière atemporelle, nous proposant presque une sorte d''éternel maghrébin', tel que le voit l'œil colonisateur français.

L'autre, au contraire, actualise le 'message' de la fable, au lieu de le généraliser en sens universel et absolu ; parfois à la fin, dans la morale (*in cauda venenum*). Par exemple, en particulier en fonction antijuive, ainsi que l'on peut voir dans « La cigale y la formi » (4) et dans la première fable de « Li corbeau y li chacail » (8). À remarquer surtout la causticité de la polémique antijuive de « Li vio tiraillor y li gran manovre » (conte, mais en vers) (103):[29]

Bocop di zraélète / (Tous qui son embusqués)	Beaucoup d'israélites (Tous des embusqués)
[...]	[...]
Quand ji voir tos cit jouifs,	Quand je vois tous ces Juifs,
Gross, finian, poussifs,	Gros, fainéants, hors d'haleine,
Qui fir sarbice comme zouaves.	Sous les drapeaux comme zouaves.
Moi ji souit Kabyle,	Moi je suis Kabyle,
Ma, to si, ji soui brave !	Mais aussi je suis brave !
Plous qui toi ji conni quis cit on bataille	Mieux que toi je connais la bataille
Au milio di mitraille	Sous les coups de la mitraille
Moi-même ji soui bassi :	Moi-même je suis passé :
Ma si ji panse on jor / Qui li jouif vian Franci,	Mais si un jour je pense que le juif sera Français
Jami, akarbi* [* Parole d'honneur], ji fir moi taraillor.	Jamais, ma parole d'honneur ! je deviendrai tirailleur

Les *Fables et Contes en sabir* de Kaddour sont de loin le texte le plus connu, plus encore que les textes en sabir de KBN ou de Muracciole, dont la notoriété personnelle et artistique générale dépasse la connaissance/diffusion réelle de leur recueil de fables et contes. De plus, le texte de Kaddour (et je ne me réfère qu'aux éditions originales, de 1898, 1916 et 1920 : cette dernière est la seule présente dans les catalogues informatisés des grandes bibliothèques) est celui qui compte le plus grand nombre de fables, dont il est constitué presque entièrement ; Kaddour ben Nitran (1931), par exemple, n'en compte que deux, ainsi que Gavaldon (1964) ; Ben Chouftou (1932) et Dominus (1934) sept chacun ; Muracciole (1937), Dupuy (1947) et Galléa (2014) douze chacun ; M'Sio Kfouss (1913) quatorze.

De deux types sont, en résumant, les conclusions que l'on peut tirer de cette première ébauche d'analyse.

L'un voit une nature de ces textes en sabir, et une attitude de leur auteur, fondamentalement négatives : minorantes, colonialistes dans l'acception

29 L'allusion est au décret Crémieux, qui en 1870 attribue la citoyenneté française aux Juifs d'Algérie de manière automatique, tandis qu'il n'en ira pas de même pour les Musulmans.

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Le Marchand de Tapis

SCÈNE

La dame entre suivie d'Ali qui la presse pour lui vendre quelque chose.

(Ali est chargé de toutes sortes de marchandises : tapis, peaux de bêtes, choses de bazar... Autant que possible, il montre l'article dont il parle.)

ALI

Alli, madame, achite moi !... J'en i tot ça qui ti vox. Ji vends di tot !

LA CLIENTE

Tu n'as rien d'alimentaire ?

ALI

Ali-mentire, non, madame ! Ji souis pas Ali-mentire... Ji souis Ali Makmal ben Zlabiya, commarçant.

LA CLIENTE

Tu as ta licence ?

ALI

Di l'issence, oui, j'en i... Ouala c'it di l'issence di roses di Tourquie... di vri... C'it fabriqui à Pantin.

LA CLIENTE

Ah bah !

ALI

Bas ! oussi ! Ji tians lis bas... I di sauchittes di soie, tot laine, garanti coton !

LA CLIENTE

Article brillant !

ALI

Brillant, comme ti dis ! Lis brillants, lis saphirs, lis roubis... i dis pirles... ça jouli... on coullier manifique... Tians! c'it oune affire... ji donne bor rian !

LA CLIENTE

Pour rien ?... Ça colle !

ALI

Kohl, si ti vox !... J'en i li vri Kohl di maurisques... Ça c'it bor lis yox !... I lis faux-cols... por lis chimises.

LA CLIENTE

Allons, tu dis des blagues.

ALI

Oualà dis blagues... bor mittre la tabac !.. Oussi dis autres artiques di maraquinirie : borte-monnaie ! Ti mittes ici billet cent sous, ici ti mittes pièces quarante sous...

LA CLIENTE

Nous savons ! Nous savons !

ALI

Savon ?... Y en a di savon... por la toilitte... Dis savonnittes parfimi à l'ouragan. Ça marqui dissour... Rigarde !

16 —

Dominus (1934). *Sabir avec Le Marchand de Tapis*, 15-16

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la plus négative du terme et donc racistes. L’autre type de conclusion les voit au fond colonialistes, mais avec des nuances, des différences significatives : d’un colonialisme moins raciste que paternaliste, arrivant jusqu’à un certain degré d’empathie qui, sous prétexte de manifestation coloniale, fait ou ferait en réalité de ces textes un tacite hommage à la culture qu’ils prennent comme objet, qui par là acquiert un statut de reconnaissance.

Les contes en sabir sont souvent des simples sketches comiques se basant sur la méprise linguistique de la part de l’alloglotte, dont on se moque du seul et simple fait qu’il ne comprend pas assez bien la langue du Même, qui considère la langue française la langue par antonomase. Le reste et les Autres (les alloglottes) ne font à ses yeux que bégayer, nouveaux bárbaroi**.**

Il n’en va pas tout à fait de même pour les *Fables* versifiées en sabir, où il n’y a pas de match, de compétition entre les deux codes linguistiques : un, le second, est voué dès le départ à l’échec, à la défaite, vu que l’autre contendant est en même temps l’adversaire qui se bat pour affirmer sa supériorité et le juge qui sanctionnera de la qualité de la performance, de la supériorité et de la victoire.

On peut distinguer divers niveaux possibles d’énonciation en sabir dans ces textes.

Il peut y avoir un degré zéro où le sabir et son locuteur sont cités, représentés dans un contexte discursif français ; c’est-à-dire qu’il y aussi au moins un locuteur français et que leur situation d’énonciation est majoritairement française (cf. Dominus, « Le Marchant de Tapis » scène, 15 ; « Le Renseignement d’Ali », scène, 113-15 ; v. Kaddour ben Nitran, « Kaddour géographe », 1931, 21-2).

Ou bien, dans le cas de Kaddour (1898, 107-9), « Conte arabe », où « la scène se passe dans un corps de garde occupé par des tirailleurs indigènes » ; cette scène est très peu française : en français il n’y a que l’ouverture que l’on vient de citer et quelques répliques.

La situation d’énonciation est entièrement mais relativement sabir, puisqu’elle est introduite ou gérée par un sujet énonciateur sabirisant, qui s’énonce en déclinant parfois son état civil et militaire : mais c’est un discours direct, rapporté par un énonciateur caché, même s’il n’y a pas d’énoncés français (par exemple, Kaddour, « Kaddour au conseil de guerre… (Monologue) » 1898, 79-84, entièrement et absolument en sabir, même les répliques des Français ; cependant titre et sous-titres sont en français).

S’il y a un narrateur sabirisant, il n’est pas identifié et relativisé, c’est-à-dire rendu typique : c’est plutôt un sujet sabir de type général, de fiction, anonyme (cf. Kaddour, « Li corbeau y li chacail », 1898, 9-10 ; ou bien, dans beaucoup de fables, il n’y a pas de narrateur sabirisant manifesté : l’énonciation est sabir mais neutre, objectivée, donc absolue. On n’est plus en présence d’un discours strictement colonial, mais d’un discours tout

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court : en sabir, certes, mais c'est un sujet qui parle sabir de la même manière que les autres sujets parlants parlent la langue qui leur appartient.

L'expression/créativité coloniale s'exerce dans les deux directions, vers le haut et vers le bas. Vers le haut par la parodie, participée sur le plan affectif, en quelque sorte amoureuse, des grands textes de la littérature française, la littérature-mère (parodie du Cid, d'Horace, etc.) ;[30] vers le bas quand elle s'inspire d'un genre qui, tout étant assez haut (ou noble) à l'origine, sur le sol colonial devient plus circonscrit, réduit à une réalité mineure, seulement quotidienne et faite de menus problèmes (les fables – le plus souvent animalières – imitées de La Fontaine).

Pour la parodie haute on a recours à la langue naturelle des Français d'Algérie/Maghreb, le pataouète ; pour la parodie basse, exclusivement comique/satirique (caricaturale souvent), on se sert du sabir ou plutôt de sa variante pseudo- et caricaturalement littéraire. Et les acteurs de cette mise en scène coloniale de parodie littéraire, ce sont, lorsqu'elle regarde en haut les Pieds-Noirs, les Colons, et lorsqu'elle regarde en bas, les 'Indigènes', les Colonisés ou leurs substituts animaux.

5 Conclusion

Une distance, une extranéité sépare la culture algérienne actuelle – postcoloniale, voire encore anticoloniale – de la littérature/culture pieds-noirs (beaucoup moins la tunisienne, et pour cause !), qui peut amener à ne pas ressentir la nécessité de faire le partage, à l'intérieur de cette littérature/culture coloniale, entre le côté pataouète et le côté sabir, tout étant ressenti au fond comme colonial tout court.[31]

J'ai constaté aussi, avec une certaine surprise, que les Maghrébins, anciens colonisés, ne manifestent pas forcément de l'animosité, de la critique ulcérée envers la littérature dite sabir : au moins les quelques-uns – rares – qui s'y sont attardés, qui s'en sont occupés (Bendana, Miliani, Beltaïef).[32] Le comique qui s'y développe aux frais, ou devrait – on plutôt dire : grâce aux colonisés

30 Brua, Edmond, *La parodie du Cid*, (édition définitive) Algiers, éditions Charlot, 1945, 103 p. ; Vernet, François, *La parodie d'Horace* (Farce algéroise en trois actes et en vers), Paris, Le Méridien Éditeur, 1987, 39 p. ; Fulgence, *Phèdre aux pieds noirs* (véritable tragédie pataouète, terrible et déchirante en 5 actes), notes, espications (et, même, des fois) critiques par le prof. Remoughi Albahri (démissionnaire); Niort, Imbert-Nicolas, 1977, 157 p..

31 On le voit, par exemple, quand Miliani (2009, 18) range *Cagayous* dans le champ de la littérature sabir avec Dominus.

32 Pour Beltaïef (2015, 269-70), Kaddour ben Nitram « dans une langue imaginative, mais non imaginaire, cet acrobate a jonglé avec les mots et reproduit une société colorée et remarquablement vivante. Une société plurielle avec ses parlers, ses cultures, ses religions, ses anecdotes et son histoire ». Au sujet de Kaddour, un critique – français, il est vrai, comme Audin (1992, 275) – arrive même à dire : « Il devient vite évident que l'emploi du

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mis en scène, ne les irrite pas, ils ne semblent pas en être réellement touchés. C'est comme s'ils considéraient que l'objet visé par cette caricature n'en était pas un véritablement. Ce serait plutôt une sorte de victime de fiction, non réelle, une cible de manière dans un jeu colonial sans doute, mais de nature différente. Différente de quoi ? Par exemple, différente des caricatures absolument négatives de certains textes et attitudes du colonialisme de salon, d'Européens restés en Europe qui font la caricature cruelle et méprisante de cet Autre qu'ils n'ont jamais connu en réalité.

Car il y a une différence fondamentale entre ces deux formes de langues pidginisées que sont ce pseudo-sabir et le petit-nègre utilisé, par exemple, dans la bande dessinée. Les deux ont et visent un effet comique, à cette différence près : le petit-nègre et l'affaire et l'œuvre d'auteurs externes, étrangers foncièrement ou totalement à l'objet de leur représentation, tandis que le pseudo-sabir est mis en œuvre et savamment manié par des acteurs, par des protagonistes de ce même monde colonial.

En effet, parmi les textes de la littérature dite sabir, il y en a qui sont exempts de la caricature de l'Autre (à la différence des sketches, des 'scènes de vie' et semblables), surtout parce que souvent, comme dans les *Fables*, l'Autre n'est pas présent : on n'y trouve que des animaux anthropomorphisés.

Alors, qu'est-ce que cela représente que d'énoncer dans une langue autre, qui est censée être la langue de l'Autre, en le faisant parler sabir et par là essayer en vain de se faire Même par une imitation fautive de son langage ? Cela représente un fantasme, le fantasme colonial. Le fantasme du sujet que l'on n'arrive pas, que l'on ne veut pas, que l'on a peur de reconnaître en tant que tel, à plein titre, et que l'on préférerait garder au rang d'objet de son propre discours socio-historique. Une solution de compromis est justement celle des textes en sabir non caricaturaux : moi, le sujet colonial, je fais parler l'objet colonial, je lui donne la parole mais non la sienne propre : je lui prête la mienne dépouillée, déformée, bref abîmée, en faisant semblant que, à travers moi, ce soit lui qui parle, alors que, en réalité, la parole est toujours la mienne, bien qu''en travesti'. En effet, les fins diseurs qui récitent ou interprètent sur la scène du music-hall ou café-concert des monologues ou des scènes sabir, le font souvent 'en travesti' ethnique.[33]

Si c'est un contact discursif, c'est un contact substitué qui sanctionne l'impossibilité de l'Autre – et de sa langue, de sa culture – de s'énoncer

Sabir participe de la stratégie d'un hommage conjoint, fervent mais pudique, à La Fontaine et à l'Algérie ».

33 L'on en voit les images dans Ben Nitram (1931), Lambert (s.d.). La couverture même du *Sabir avec Le Marchand de Tapis*, de Dominus (1934), nous montre justement un marchand de tapis maghrébin ou, plus vraisemblablement, Dominus lui-même déguisé de la sorte pour la scène.

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tout seul et conformément à sa nature dans le champ discursif de l'imaginaire populaire colonial. Ou bien il n'est qu'un objet représenté (dans les textes caricaturaux), ou bien il est un pseudo-sujet, un sujet énonciateur de fiction, cantonné dans son infériorité linguistique coloniale. Sa vraie langue et sa vraie culture, et non pas celles qui lui sont imposées ou proposées pour son assimilation, elles restent en dehors ou tout au plus aux marges du discours qui anime la société coloniale, comme des présences sporadiques : des simples mots ou des courtes phrases isolées et stéréotypées dont le discours du Même s'empare pour les retenir à titre de souvenirs.

Le pseudo-sabir de fiction – et la littérature dite sabir dans laquelle il se manifeste – devient aussi un masque, un déguisement, une projection de soi dans l'Autre pour pouvoir être et dire en liberté. Il n'y a de 'pseudo-' pas que le sabir ; la caricature aussi est ou peut devenir une pseudo-caricature : car à être caricaturé ce n'est pas l'Autre mais, à travers l'Autre, le Même.[34]

Si l'on écrit en sabir un sketch, l'on cherche la caricature, la mise en ridicule, puisque la présence du personnage sabirisant a pour effet – et pour but – celui de justifier les méprises, les quiproquo et donc le comique aux frais de celui qu'on met en scène. Là où tout le texte est entièrement en sabir, dans une pièce comme *Ça m ti garde pas ma bile mire* de Mardochée fils de Chaloum (le premier texte publié en sabir que l'on a pu dénicher jusqu'à présent),[35] l'effet de dépaysement drolatique est garanti a priori par le fait que la langue utilisée – le sabir – n'est pas la langue du public, public que l'on veut faire rire en lui mettant en scène ce qui à ses yeux constitue un sous-monde qui parle une sous-langue et répond à des sous-valeurs : bref, en lui offrant en spectacle un topos discriminatoire à grand succès. La caricature à caractère malveillant, bien visible dans le choix du pseudonyme utilisé (deux noms juifs : Mardochée et Chaloum) était du reste affiché avec ostentation dans le sous-titre de la pièce : « vaudeville en un acte et cinq Juifs ».

Au contraire, écrire des fables imitées de La Fontaine ou, mieux, inspirées, voire recréees en sabir, constitue peut-être un jeu littéraire mais, justement, littéraire (et toutes mises en vers): cela fournit une littérature et donc des lettres de noblesses, fût-ce sur le mode parodique, à une langue qui, véhiculaire et unilatérale, n'en avait pas et n'aurait pas dû en avoir.

Mutatis mutandis, il arrive pour ce sabir (pesudo-sabir de fiction et littéraire) ce qui arrive aussi, dans une certaine mesure, au latin macaronique. Au départ il y a une série de contraintes formelles, dont

34 Cet aspect très important, voire central, de la problématique liée aux 'fables en sabir', fera l'objet principal de l'analyse dans un travail imminent.

35 Pièce signalée, le premier, par Schuchardt [1909] 2009, 30.

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deux spécialement : la première, le respect absolu de la grammaire latine dans un cas, de la syntaxe française dans l'autre, mais avec la déformation phonétique systématique ; comme deuxième. le recours à un lexique particulier.

À partir de là, il y a l'avènement de cette langue (le latin macaronique, le sabir), grâce à et dans les textes, avec lesquels elle coïncide. Cette langue est la fille d'une contrainte et d'une liberté : langue bâtarde sans doute, mais savoureuse, pulpeuse et, surtout, aimée.

Une littérature naît, se conçoit dans une langue nouvelle, dans laquelle elle consiste et qu'elle fait naître en même temps qu'elle (mais qu'elle n'invente pas de toute pièce, néanmoins) .

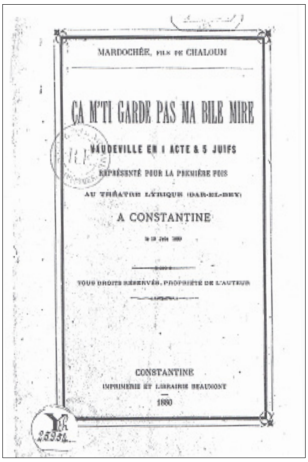
Cette littérature, dès sa naissance, est confrontée implicitement ou explicitement à une autre littérature et à sa langue qui, toutes les deux, sont indispensables à son existence. Pour la littérature dite sabir ce rapport est à la littérature françaises (en l'occurrence à La Fontaine) et au français. Pour la littérature macaronique, la source d'inspiration et d'expression ce sont le latin et la littérature classique (épique et bucolique, géorgique).

De telles littératures, qui regardent à un modèle pour l'expression aussi bien que pour le contenu, pour s'en détourner aussitôt ou mieux pour procéder de manière indépendante quoique parallèle, de telles littératures sont génétiquement et structurellement des littératures comparées, elles le sont a priori : comme la littérature macaronique italienne du XVIe siècle, comme la littérature dite sabir de la colonisation et post-colonisation française du Maghreb, des dernières décennies du XIXe siècle à nos jours.

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Iconographie

Textes en sabir (entièrement ou partiellement), 1880-2014.
Couvertures / Frontispice



1880 Mardochée, fils de Chaloum (1880). *Ça m' ti garde pas ma bile mire : vaudeville en 1 acte & 5 juifs*. Constantine : Beaumont. 16 p



1898 KADDOUR, *Fables & contes (en sabir)*, Alger



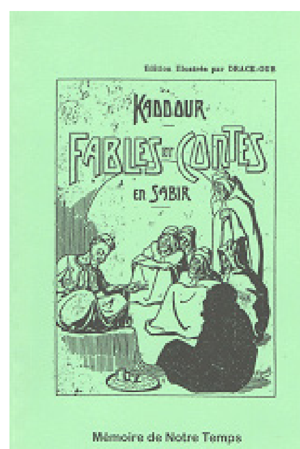
1916 KADDOUR, *Fables & contes (en sabir)*, Alger ; rééd.



1913 M'SIO KFOUSS, *Por passi on moment en sociti*. 135 monologues sabirs, Oran



1926 Stokafitch P., *Tchalèfes algériennes*

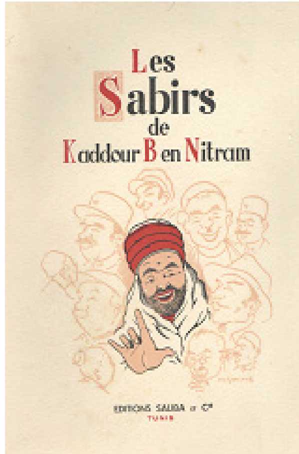


1930 KADDOUR, *Fables & contes en sabir*, éd. illustrée par Drack-Oub, (réimpr. s.d.)

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1931 BEN NITRAM, Kaddour, *Les sabirs de Kaddour ben Nitram*, Tunis, éd. Bonici, 1931, 117 p.



1952 rééd. – KbN, *Les sabirs de Kaddour ben Nitram*, Tunis, Editions Saliba Et Cie, 1952. 147 p.



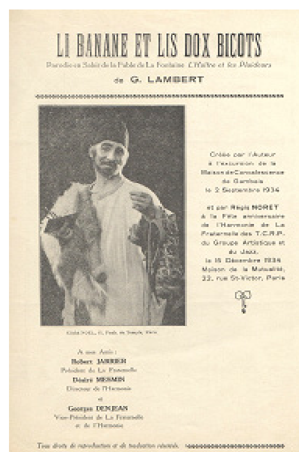
1932 BEN CHOUFTOU, *Contes et fables en sabir*, Paris, Impr. Latour. s.d. 81 p.



1934-193 Le Margaillon (Dromadaire, comique y dorbafique), rééd. 2011. 204 p.

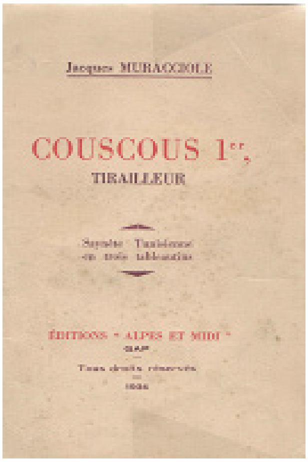


1934 DOMINUS, *Sabir avec Le Marchand de Tapis*, Paris, chez l'auteur, 1934, 157 p.

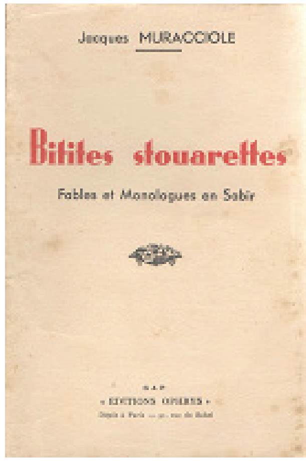


1934 LAMBERT, G., *Li banane et lis dox bicots* (Parodie en Sabir de la Fable de La Fontaine, 'L'Huître et les Plaideurs'), Vincennes, Impr. e Lucien Pellerin, 4 p

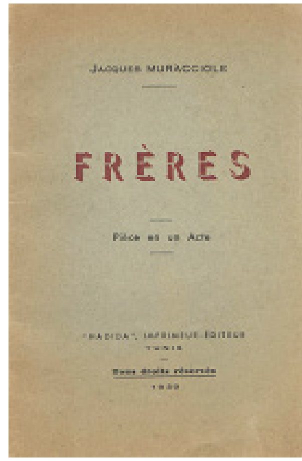
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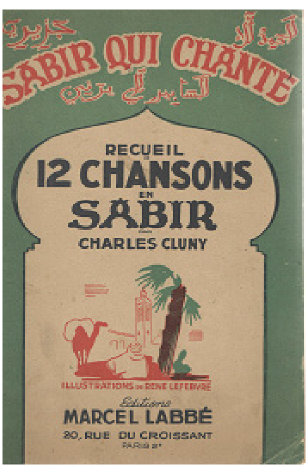
1934 MURACCIOLE, Jacques, *Couscous 1er*, Tirailleur (Saynète tunisienne en trois tableautins), Gap, éd. 'Alpes et Midi', 54 p.



1937 MURACCIOLE, Jacques, *Bitites Stouarettes. Fables et Monologues en Sabir*, Gap, Édition Ophrys, 1937, 118 p.



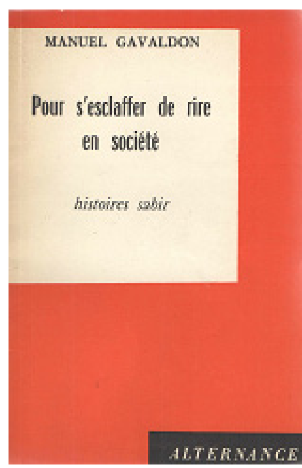
1939 MURACCIOLE, Jacques, *Frères*. Tunis : ‘Hadida’. Imprimeur Editeur, 33 p.



1945 CLUNY, Charles, *Sabir qui chante. Recueil de 12 chansons en sabir*, Paris, Éditions Marcel Labbé, s.d., 48 p.; illustr. de René Lefebvre

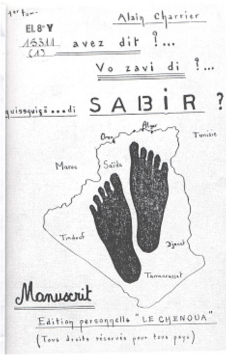


1947 DUPUY, Aimé, *12 fables en sabir franco arabe et Ben Ali à l’école. Scène comique en sabir racontées par Aimé Dupuy*, le Tirailleur algérien, Paris, Marcus, 16 p.

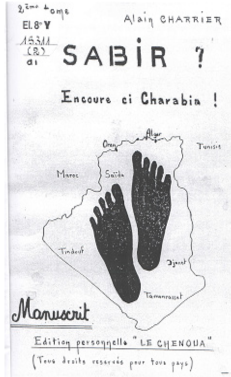


1964 GAVALDON, Manuel, *Pour s’esclaffer de rire (histoires sabir)*. Paris, Éditions du Scorpion, 187 p.

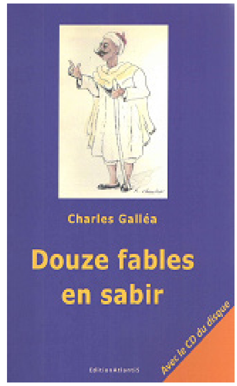
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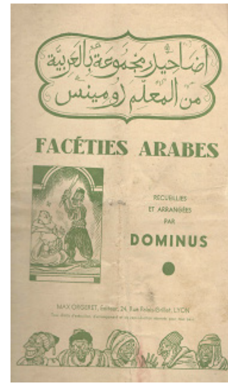
1982 CHARRIER, *Alain, Vous avez dit ? ... Vo zavi di ?... quissquiçà... di... SABIR... manuscrit, édition personnelle ‘Le Chenoua’* (dépôt légal avril 1982, B.N.P.), 1er t., 143 p.



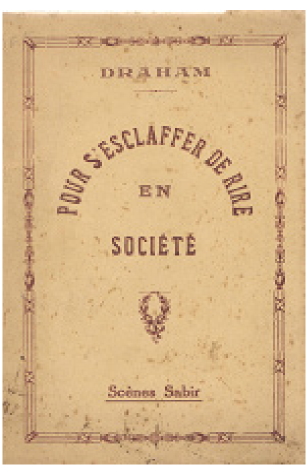
1982 CHARRIER, Alain, *SABIR Encoure ci Charabia !, manuscrit, édition personnelle ‘Le Chenoua’*. (dépôt légal juin 1982, B.N.P.), 2e t., 139 p.



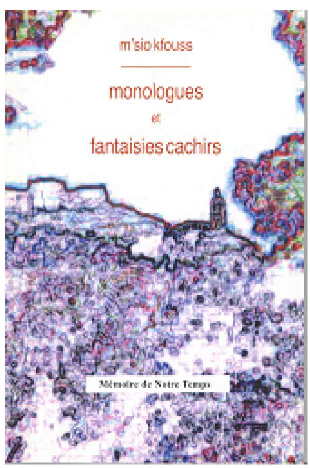
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« Un cœur désolé, une santé dévastée »
La représentation de la femme souffrante dans l'œuvre en prose de Barbey d'Aurevilly

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Abstract Although Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly has always been an enemy of Naturalism and its theoretical assumptions, he had to deal with the presentation rules of the 'clinical' romance while describing his characters' suffering bodies. On the one hand, the physiognomy theories, very dear to Balzac, enrich Barbey's modes of expression and justify the analogy between body and soul; on the other, it is not possible to describe the characters' bodies and to reveal the mystery behind them. Despite this, the lack of psychological analysis in the *récit* is compensated by metaphorical characterisation: indeed, similes, metaphors, antithesis and oxymorons enrich the description of characters revealing their main passions and features. The aim of this article is to show, by means of the text analysis of some passages, that the realistic details of descriptions are not vain if related to their metaphorical meaning and that, in so doing, the author overcomes the impasse of the rational scientific observation and the physiognomic interpretation.

Keywords Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly. Metaphor. 19th century. Novel. Bodies.

1 Une représentation du corps anti-naturaliste

L'aversion de Barbey d'Aurevilly pour le Naturalisme est connue. Catholique et monarchiste, adversaire acharné du déterminisme et du matérialisme dont se réclament les écrivains réalistes et naturalistes, il consacre plusieurs articles aux œuvres de ses ennemis littéraires. Il y met en cause la poétique réaliste, tels le choix de sujets bas et ignobles – véritable lieu commun de la critique de la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle – l'obsession pour « les faits de la matière » (Barbey d'Aurevilly 1968, 87), les prétentions de vérité et de scientificité, la prolifération des descriptions et le recours fréquent au « dénouement pathologique » (87). Il exprime des jugements tranchants et va jusqu'à imaginer le développement des romans qu'il critique en se représentant les effets pathétiques, sublimes ou grandioses que lui,

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plus « spiritualiste » que M. de Goncourt ou M. Zola, aurait tiré de tel personnage ou de tel accident (86), comme celui du clown dans les *Frères Zemganno* : « dans le roman de M. de Goncourt, le roman finit aux jambes cassées, et c’est là, pour nous, qu’il commence » (71).

C’est que Barbey n’exile pas le corps et ses péripéties de sa prose, bien au contraire. Les corps des personnages sont souvent décrits ou placés au centre de l’attention, la représentation des corps souffrants en particulier n’étant pas rare dans ses romans et dans ses nouvelles. Dans certains textes, même, la maladie d’un personnage constitue le nœud fondamental de l’intrigue. Il est légitime de s’interroger sur la différence entre l’usage qu’il fait des données physiques ou cliniques, et le traitement naturaliste du corps et de la maladie, et pourquoi il fait recours à la maladie alors qu’il condamne « l’animalité » de son époque,

> [un] siècle qui [va], de toutes parts, aux préoccupations physiques, et qui ne trouve plus d’autre terrible et d’autres sources de pathétique dans ses romans de sentiments et de passion, que la hideuse mort animale de ses héros. (87)

Les expressions « terrible » et « sources de pathétique » constituent selon nous la clé pour comprendre le rapport de Barbey avec ce que la critique a appelé « le roman physiologique » (Sermadiras 2016, 265). Barbey n’hésite pas à utiliser le corps et ses pathologies comme des ressorts de la narration, mais il refuse de faire du registre physiologique le mode privilégié de la représentation : le savoir clinique ne constitue pas une science exacte qui permettrait de décrire et d’expliquer la nature humaine, mais plutôt une façon d’enrichir la caractérisation de ses personnages,« une nourriture pour son imaginaire, une nouvelle source de dramatisation » (275).

2 Les souffrantes aurevilliennes

Il y a de nombreux personnages souffrants dans les romans et les nouvelles de Barbey d’Aurevilly. Il s’agit surtout de personnages féminins : *Le Prêtre marié* et la nouvelle *Léa* sont consacrés à la représentation d’une maladie et de son dénouement tragique, mais les descriptions des corps féminins malades ou blessés peuplent les textes de Barbey d’une façon presque obsédante : Lasthénie souffre une longue agonie dans *Une histoire sans nom*, Hortense et la Pudica sont« cachetées » dans *Le Cachet d’Onyx* et dans « À un dîner d’athées » ; Alberte meurt d’un mal mystérieux dans *Le Rideau cramoisi*, Madame de Savigny est empoisonnée dans « Le Bonheur dans le crime », la petite masque meurt d’une maladie de la poitrine dans « Le Plus Bel Amour de Don Juan », la duchesse d’Arcos de Sierra Leone contracte une horrible maladie vénérienne dans « La Vengeance d’une

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femme », Hermangarde s’évanouit et délire pendant une nuit d’hiver dans *Une Vieille maîtresse*, Aimée de Spens est sourde dans *Le Chevalier des Touches*, Mme de Scudemor meurt d’un terrible accouchement à la fin de *Ce qui ne meurt pas*. Si le nombre et la variété des cas pathologiques nous permettent d’apprécier l’importance du thème de la maladie dans la prose de Barbey, il est cependant nécessaire de faire quelques observations préliminaires.[1]

Les personnages que nous avons cités ne sont pas tous malades au sens clinique du terme, la souffrance ne dérivant pas toujours d’un état pathologique *stricto sensu*. D’un côté, des états qui n’auraient rien de pathologique en soi – tels que la vieillesse, la grossesse ou l’amour – sont représentés comme étant strictement liés à la maladie car ils provoquent des troubles physiques ou psychologiques si graves qu’ils amènent à la souffrance et à la mort. D’un autre côté, la souffrance physique et la souffrance morale sont toujours si étroitement liées (que l’une constitue la cause de l’autre ou qu’il y ait ambiguïté entre les deux) qu’il est presque impossible de faire la distinction entre les personnages qui souffrent de véritables maladies et ceux qui sont atteints d’un trouble moral ou psychologique. Parfois la souffrance est causée par un acte de violence, la violence d’un homme – le « cachetage » de la main de l’amant – ou auto-infligée – comme dans le cas des épingles meurtrières de Lasthénie. Le thème de la profanation apparaît alors là où le corps féminin est labouré ou massacré par des mains masculines.[2]

Le personnage souffrant est toujours observé, son corps étant « mis en scène » et donné à voir à un spectateur, plus ou moins avisé, qui cherche à en déchiffrer les symptômes et à en comprendre le secret. Parce que les personnages sont souvent mystérieux et qu’ils portent en eux quelque chose de dérangeant et d’inexplicable, leur corps est soumis à un questionnement et fait l’objet d’une interprétation. Le personnage observateur n’est pas souvent, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans le

1 Toutes les héroïnes aurevilliennes ne sont pas représentées de la même façon. Dans la nouvelle « Le Bonheur dans le crime », Hauteclaire constitue au contraire un exemple frappant de santé et de beauté. C’est justement le côté scandaleux de la nouvelle, énoncé dans le titre : Savigny et Hauteclaire vivent un bonheur parfait alors qu’ils sont coupables d’un crime affreux. La santé et la beauté de l’assassine Hauteclaire ressortent encore mieux de la confrontation avec la comtesse, innocente et pourtant destinée à la souffrance et à la mort.

2 Le thème de la profanation du corps féminin est strictement lié à des connotations érotiques : dans la nouvelle « Le Rideau cramoisi », Brassard veut saigner Alberte avec un couteau dans le but de la sauver. La description de ce geste est rendue troublante par la présence des verbes « labourer », « massacrer », « galvaniser », décrivant une grande violence, et des mots « baisers », « succions », « morsures », renvoyant à une dimension sexuelle explicite. Comme le souligne Philippe Berthier, « les implications érotiques [de l’image] ne cessent de s’approfondir au fur et à mesure que l’image prend de la netteté » jusqu’à acquérir une connotation « sadique » (Berthier 1978, 157).

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roman réaliste-naturaliste, un homme de science (Cabanès 1991, vol. 2, chap. 1). Le corps féminin est surtout observé par un homme dont le regard n’est pas neutre ou impartial, mais au contraire empreint de désir : dans la première *Diabolique*, Alberte est observée par son amant le jeune lieutenant Brassard ; dans *Léa*, la jeune fille souffre sous le regard anxieux de sa mère mais aussi sous celui de Réginald ; dans « Un dîner d’athées » le corps rougissant de la Pudica est regardé avec étonnement par ses amants ; dans *Une Histoire sans nom* Lasthénie est observée par sa mère, obsédée par l’idée de connaître le secret de sa fille ; enfin, dans *Un prêtre marié*, Calixte est constamment sous la surveillance de Sombreval, qui est bien sûr un savant mais aussi et avant tout un père passionnément attaché à sa fille, et sous celle de Néel, le jeune homme qui est amoureux d’elle.

3 Les plaisirs de l’observateur : le personnage-médecin

Une nouvelle des *Diaboliques* met en scène le personnage d’un observateur scientifique : le docteur Torty, dans « Le Bonheur dans le crime », explique sa curiosité par une sorte de déformation professionnelle qui n’a rien à voir avec ses sentiments. C’est avant tout pour satisfaire sa curiosité qu’il entre au château de Savigny et qu’il se mêle aux aventures de Hauteclaire, du comte et de la comtesse. En effet, il parle de son « attitude passive de médecin et d’observateur » (Barbey d’Aurevilly 1966, 102), qui risque d’être bouleversée par la vue de Hauteclaire déguisée en Eulalie, et de « l’intérêt de l’observateur » qui le pousse à ne pas dénoncer le couple adultère :

> Ah ! les plaisirs de l’observateur ! ces plaisirs impersonnels et solitaires de l’observateur, que j’ai toujours mis au-dessus de tous les autres, j’allais pouvoir me les donner en plein. (102-3)

Le docteur Torty place donc les plaisirs de l’observation au dessus de la morale commune, selon laquelle il serait le complice des amants coupables. Il peut ainsi se consacrer à la situation inédite qu’il vient de découvrir, et profiter de l’autorité de son métier pour regarder de près le drame intime qui se joue entre les personnages.

> Je pourrais donc étudier, avec autant d’intérêt et de suite qu’une maladie, le mystère d’une situation qui, racontée à n’importe qui, aurait semblé impossible… Et comme déjà, dès le premier jour que je l’entrevis, ce mystère excita en moi la faculté ratiocinante, qui est le bâton d’aveugle du savant et surtout du médecin, dans la curiosité acharnée de leurs recherches, je commençai immédiatement de raisonner cette situation pour l’éclairer… (102)

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« Faculté ratiocinante », « curiosité acharnée », « raisonner », et « éclairer » sont autant de termes qui éclairent la portée parodique de cette représentation. Il ne faut pas oublier que le docteur Torty est présenté au début de la nouvelle comme un « franc disciple de Cabanis en philosophie médicale » faisant partie « de l’école de ces médecins terribles par un matérialisme absolu » (82). Or la médecine est un point de référence constant dans la littérature réaliste et naturaliste. Doté de capacités d’observation et d’analyse, le médecin est porteur d’un savoir scientifique et d’une autorité qui assurent la véridicité de son jugement. Il assume le rôle de « personnage-témoin » qui observe, isole et relate les symptômes des manifestations pathologiques, mais aussi celui de « médiateur de savoir » (Cabanès 1991, 2: 226). C’est ce personnage, devenu un type littéraire, qui est la cible de l’ironie de Barbey. Mais si, dans *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert se moquait des médecins et du pharmacien en leur prêtant des discours aussi pédants qu’incongrus, Barbey choisit une autre stratégie. Tout en jouant sur l’accumulation des références qui poussent le portrait dans le champ du parodique, il ne prive pas le docteur Torty de son autorité, en l’investissant du rôle de narrateur intradiégétique. Or pour être représenté sur un ton ironique, le docteur Torty n’en est pas moins un personnage-clé dans « Le Bonheur dans le crime », puisqu’il joue le double rôle d’observateur et d’interprète du corps des autres.

4 Corps malades, corps lisibles : la physiognomonie et ses limites

Le docteur Torty ne s’intéresse pas seulement aux faits médicaux : il cherche à résoudre avant tout l’énigme de la disparition de Hauteclaire.[3] Plus avisé que les habitants du village, il est pourtant aussi dupe qu’eux de l’aspect impassible de la demoiselle de Stassin.

> Moi-même, qui me piquais d’observation, j’étais, sur le chapitre de la vertu de Hauteclaire, de la même opinion que toute la ville. […] Sa physionomie, extrêmement fière, et qui n’avait pas alors cette expression passionnée dont vous venez d’être si frappé, ne trahissait ni chagrin, ni préoccupation, ni rien enfin de nature à faire prévoir, même de la manière la plus lointaine, la chose étonnante qui, dans l’atmosphère d’une petite ville, tranquille et routinière, fit l’effet d’un coup de canon et cassa les vitres… (Barbey d’Aurevilly 1966, 97)

3 Sur la dimension énigmatique des héroïnes aurevilliennes, cf. Boucher 1976.

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Il ne suspecte rien parce que la physionomie de la jeune fille ne trahit rien. Caché ou impassible, le visage de Hauteclaire ne révèle pas ses émotions et ne donne pas d’indices sur sa conduite.

Hauteclaire n’est pas le seul personnage féminin de la nouvelle dont le corps fait l’objet d’une mise en scène et d’une observation attentive de la part du docteur. En effet, après s’être introduit dans le château de Savigny et avoir découvert Hauteclaire sous le masque de la servante Eulalie, il décide de s’attacher au cas de la comtesse, dont il espère pouvoir tirer des confidences :

> C’est donc sur la comtesse que je concentrai mon attention. J’eus d’autant moins de peine à la pénétrer qu’elle était ma malade, et, par le fait de sa maladie, le point de mire de mes observations. (105)

Si la maladie est le prétexte qui permet au docteur un accès privilégié dans l’intimité de la comtesse, elle est aussi le terme de comparaison évoqué pour parler du mystère que le docteur voudrait percer, l’étrange situation étant aussi intéressante qu’une pathologie difficile à diagnostiquer. Le parallèle est d’autant plus saillant que la maladie de la comtesse est mystérieuse, la noble dame étant « très souffrante d’un mal vague et compliqué, plus dangereux qu’une maladie sévèrement caractérisée » (101). Le docteur Torty essaye donc de déterminer la nature de cette vague maladie et en même temps de l’étrange situation qui se déroule au château :

> Je me mis donc à ausculter doublement cette petite femme, qui ne pouvait pas rester lettre close pour son médecin bien longtemps. Qui confesse le corps tient vite le cœur. (106)

Les lieux communs du registre clinique s’accumulent au fil du texte : la confiance du médecin dans le pouvoir de l’observation, son autorité, le lexique de la science tel que « observations », « ausculter », « pénétrer » qui évoquent l’image d’un corps lisible, à la surface transparente. Cette lisibilité potentielle se joue d’ailleurs sur un double plan, celui du « corps » et celui du « cœur ». Par l’observation de l’un, le docteur veut pénétrer l’autre : l’auscultation est à la fois psychologique et physique et le choix du verbe « confesser » n’est pas anodin. Le médecin a remplacé le prêtre, puisqu’il écoute les secrets de l’âme aussi bien que ceux du corps et qu’il découvre les premiers en déchiffrant les seconds.

La correspondance entre le corps et l’âme est à la base des théories de la physiognomonie. Comme l’a montré Reto Zöllner, Barbey s’est beaucoup intéressé aux théories de Lavater et notamment à sa conception de la physiognomonie en tant que « combinaison entre l’observation exacte de chaque partie du corps et l’imagination nécessaire pour venir aux conclusions » (Zöllner 2016, 107). Si le romancier condamne les théories

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de Gall dont il refuse les présupposés matérialistes et les prétentions de scientificité et d’exhaustivité, il suit avec enthousiasme l’idée d’une analogie entre l’intérieur et l’extérieur, entre le moral et le physique, entre le dessous et le dessus. Dans son œuvre, beaucoup de personnages présentent ce double aspect qui est cependant dissimulé : de nombreux héros et héroïnes portent un masque ou un voile qui cache un secret inconfessable. Souvent, le voile n’est pas entièrement levé, les récits se fermant sur des hypothèses ou sur des questions restées sans réponse. Les corps des personnages sont toujours observés mais ils ne sont pas toujours lus, l’interprétation physiognomonique aboutissant souvent à un échec à cause du mystère impénétrable qui entoure le personnage ou à cause de sa nature oxymorique et pour cette raison déroutante.

« Le Bonheur dans le crime » constitue un exemple de mise en scène de l’observation physiognomonique, mais aussi de son échec. En effet, les efforts du docteur Torty se révèlent inutiles, puisque tant l’observation de la physionomie de Hauteclaire que celle du corps malade de la comtesse n’aboutissent à aucune explication. Le mal de la comtesse est « vague » et « compliqué » et son aspect physique présente des traits qui provoquent des impressions contrastantes :

> C’était une femme blanche, molle de tissus, mais dure d’os, au teint de lait […].Quand elle me tendit son bras pâle, veiné comme une nacre bleuâtre, un poignet fin et de race, où le pouls à l’état normal battait languissamment, elle me fit l’effet d’être mise au monde et créée pour être victime… pour être broyée sous les pieds de cette fière Hauteclaire, qui s’était courbée devant elle jusqu’au rôle de servante. Seulement, cette idée, qui naissait d’abord en la regardant, était contrariée par un menton qui se relevait, à l’extrémité de ce mince visage, un menton de Fulvie sur les médailles romaines, égaré au bas de ce minois chiffonné, et aussi par un front obstinément bombé, sous ces cheveux sans rutilance. Tout cela finissait par embarrasser le jugement. (Barbey d’Aurevilly 1966, 106)

Barbey utilise les procédés d’accumulation et de brouillage qui lui sont chers : la comtesse est caractérisée par la mollesse et par la dureté, et l’écrivain souligne le contraste entre la blancheur de la peau et la finesse du poignet, et le menton relevé qui « embarrasse le jugement » du docteur, lequel n’arrive pas à comprendre le caractère de la noble dame. Les signes sont des plus traditionnels : la blancheur au « teint de lait » est un lieu commun de la représentation de la féminité et surtout des femmes nobles, et le menton et le front bombé sont des traits observables et interprétés dans les traités physiognomoniques. Mais la présence concomitante de ces traits entraîne une surabondance de signification qui empêche toute

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interprétation univoque.[4] « Je la tournai et la retournai vainement avec ma serre de médecin » (106-7), dit le docteur, qui manipule la comtesse comme un objet dont on voudrait voir le dessous pour en comprendre le fonctionnement, mais « vainement » : elle ne livre pas son secret et n’aide pas le praticien dans son diagnostic. Ce n’est qu’à l’approche de la mort qu’elle lui révèle la vérité, dans un aveu bouleversant. Elle a finalement ouvert les yeux sur la relation entre son mari et sa domestique, et saisi la signification des regards qu’ils s’échangent de part et d’autre de son lit (117). Le docteur découvre la vérité trop tard, mais la patiente ne veut pas être guérie. Malgré l’absence de symptômes connus, à part « les pommettes incendiées par la fièvre » (101), les impressions du docteur sont justes : la femme « de vieille race, épuisée, élégante hautaine », qu’il avait vue lors de sa première visite et qui semble dire : « je suis vaincue du temps comme ma race ; je me meurs mais je vous mépris ! » (101), ne diffère pas de la femme agonisante qui préfère mourir plutôt que provoquer un scandale sur la noblesse en décadence. Si le docteur Torty ne tire rien de l’observation physiologique de sa patiente, il reste pourtant un excellent observateur dans la mesure où il devine la passion de sa vie : l’attachement désespéré à un monde, celui de l’aristocratie, qui est en train de disparaître, et l’orgueil obstiné d’appartenir à ce monde au prix de sa vie.

Dans « À un dîner d’athées », la Pudica « aurait renversé de fond en comble le système de Lavater » (211). Ce personnage est tellement hors du commun et déroutant dans sa complexité qu’il n’est pas possible de l’enfermer dans un système. Comme chez Mme de Savigny, intériorité et extériorité se correspondent sans qu’on puisse établir une équivalence entre signe et signification : la personnalité est incarnée par un corps, qui échappe cependant à une lecture simpliste. Bien que Barbey se réfère à plusieurs reprises aux théories de la physiognomonie, il en souligne aussi les limites. Ses personnages sont trop sublimes ou trop horribles, trop radicaux dans leurs sentiments et leurs passions pour être rangés dans des catégories rationnelles et l’observation physiognomonique ne peut pas rendre compte de l’abîme que constitue le cœur des personnages. Pour évoquer cet abîme, il faut recourir à un autre registre de la représentation.

4 Sur les procédés de ‘brouillage’ de la signification chers à Barbey, cf. Georges-Métral 2007.

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5 Un bras blanc veiné comme une nacre : la caractérisation métaphorique des héroïnes souffrantes

La pâleur est le trait principal de la comtesse de Savigny : trait distinctif des femmes nobles, éloignées de la vie en plein air mais aussi pures et fragiles, la pâleur des héroïnes aurevilliennes s’exprime au travers de figures récurrentes. Le bras de la comtesse est « très blanc, veiné comme une nacre bleuâtre » (106) : Barbey compare souvent la chair de ses héroïnes à des matériaux durs et blancs, tels que le marbre, l’ivoire et le plâtre, auxquels s’ajoutent des figures relevant de la statuaire. Ainsi, Hermangarde dans *Une vieille maîtresse* a « des bras de statue antique » (1964, 412) et son corps présente « des surfaces marmoréennes » (517) ; Lasthénie est « droite, rigide et pale comme un médaillon de plâtre » (*Une histoire sans nom* 1966, 321) ; Calixte est systématiquement comparée à un marbre, un émail ou un vase d’ivoire (*Un prêtre marié* 1964, 961, 1138). Il est remarquable que presque tous les personnages féminins souffrants, qu’ils soient atteints d’un mal physique ou psychologique, aient en commun ce type de caractérisation. Sur le plan de la représentation du corps, l’image qui en résulte est celle d’une pâleur maladive et inquiétante. Mais les figures du marbre servent aussi à exprimer l’opacité des personnages, leur non-transparence, la profondeur du secret qu’ils veulent garder. Les femmes souffrantes de Barbey sont souvent des victimes silencieuses, enfermées dans une douleur muette (cf. Bricault s.d., 24-39), leur âme étant secrète, leur corps est représenté comme un matériau épais, insondable, impénétrable. Alberte est décrite par Brassard comme « un épais et dur couvercle de marbre qui brûlait, chauffé par en dessous… » (« Le Rideau cramoisi » 1966, 47). Malgré ce feu caché, le marbre du corps d’Alberte ne se fêle pas, et il n’y a pas de révélation ni d’explication possible, même après sa mort.

L’impossibilité d’aimer de certaines femmes est représentée comme une maladie et elle est caractérisée par des figures appartenant au même champ lexical : Mme de Scudemor, comparée systématiquement à Niobé, a des épaules aux « teintes jaunies comme celle d’un beau marbre lavé trop longtemps par les pluies » (*Ce qui ne meurt pas* 1966, 455) et elle est décrite comme « un bloc opaque » (603). Mme de Gesvres, elle aussi femme mûre et insensible à l’amour, est « jaunie comme les marbres exposés à l’air » (*L’Amour impossible* 1964, 46), son menton a « la matidité du marbre » et elle a « des mains de marbre », la comparaison exprimant plutôt la froideur des mains embrassées inutilement par M. de Maulévrier. Dans les cas de ces grandes impassibles, le changement de couleur du marbre traduit le changement de teint causé par la vieillesse, tandis que sa froideur et son épaisseur expriment leur trouble et leur incapacité d’aimer.

Si la présence obsessive de la métaphore sculpturale exprime « le refus de réduire le corps à sa dimension strictement physique » (Sermadiras

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2016, 281) et la volonté de le ramener au contraire à une dimension artistique, donc esthétique, il ne s’agit pas pour autant d’une simple idéalisation du personnage. Les figures du marbre constituent un réseau riche et varié dont la signification se modifie d’un personnage à l’autre et d’un texte à l’autre mais toutes contribuent à mettre en scène le corps féminin dans sa dimension charnelle, qui est explorée du point de vue de la température, de l’épaisseur ou de la couleur. Cette insistance sur la dimension matérielle du corps et sur les propriétés physiques des matériaux auxquels il est comparé montre que les figures ne se réduisent pas à des expressions figées. La concrétude par laquelle le corps est présenté renouvelle les analogies communes et donne vie à des images originales telles que le couvercle de marbre chauffé par-dessous ou les marbres lavés par la pluie. Ces figures expriment l’intériorité des personnages : le mystère inexplicable d’Alberte, le secret jalousement gardé de Calixte et de Lasthénie, la souffrance muette d’Hermangarde, l’apathie douloureuse de Mme de Gesvres et de Mme de Scudemor. En dépit d’un manque d’analyse psychologique explicite et faute d’une lecture rationnelle, la caractérisation métaphorique du corps des personnages en exprime l’essence et suggère le gouffre de leur âme.

6 Les malades d’amour

Chez les héroïnes aurevilliennes, la passion est souvent violente et fatale. Si les protagonistes des *Diaboliques* sont d’admirables exemples de passion cachée ou dissimulée, dans les romans nous trouvons des portraits de femmes folles d’amour, tellement entraînées par leurs sentiments que ceux-ci les conduisent à la maladie et à la mort. Bien avant que le dénouement s’accomplisse, la passion montre ses effets sur les corps et les visages au point d’affecter les positions sociales de ces femmes.

Dans *L’Amour impossible*, c’est avant tout la fraîcheur du teint de Mme d’Anglure qui est touchée par la force de l’amour et de la jalousie. Célèbre pour sa beauté célestielle, passionnément amoureuse de M. de Maulévrier qui l’a quittée pour faire la cour à Mme de Gesvres, elle subit les ravages de la jalousie. Sa rivale, Mme de Gesvres, remarque que

> la jalousie, que Mme d’Anglure nourrissait depuis plusieurs mois, avait marqué sa trace partout sur les lignes de ce suave visage, délicat comme le velouté des fleurs. […] La joue avait perdu sa rondeur voluptueuse, et qu’elle commençait à être envahie par le vermillon âcre et profond que donne la fièvre des passions contenues. (Barbey d’Aurevilly 1964, 100)

« La fièvre des passions » peut paraître une expression figée, mais c’est son sens littéral qui s’applique à Mme d’Anglure. Après avoir altéré son

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aspect, la passion la rend malade et son ancien amant, cause de ses peines, s’interroge sur le lien entre la jalousie et son état de santé toujours plus délétère. Convaincu que l’on ne peut mourir d’amour qu’en littérature, il est pourtant forcé de constater que « tous les accès de larmes de Mme d’Anglure finissaient par des évanouissements très réels » et qu’« une toux déjà ancienne, mais aggravée, lui causait des crachements de sang » (111). L’évolution de la maladie de Mme d’Anglure est évoquée tout au long du texte, jusqu’à sa mort. Les crachements et les vomissements de sang accompagnent ses apparitions et ses prises de parole, et elle est décrite comme un cadavre vivant « l’œil luisant, les narines creuses, la pâleur bleuâtre » (125) avec insistance, voire avec un goût du macabre qui anticipe l’esthétique décadente de la corruption corporelle.[5]

Si ses symptômes sont présentés de façon assez crue, la progression de la maladie de Mme d’Anglure s’explique cependant par des facteurs qui ne sont pas physiologiques : d’une part, à chaque fois qu’un nouveau symptôme se présente (évanouissements, toux convulsive, crachements de sang), il est toujours précédé par une crise d’ordre psychologique, une scène de jalousie, un mouvement de colère ou de désespoir. Jamais l’état de santé de la comtesse ne s’aggrave sans qu’il y ait un mouvement de l’âme qui précède la progression de sa maladie. Les liens entre la vie sentimentale et la vie physique du personnage sont plus serrés que jamais. La représentation du mal échappe parfois au registre clinique pour s’exprimer par des figures emblématiques. Lors d’un dîner pendant lequel M. de Maulévrier, Mme d’Anglure et Mme de Gesvres se font face, la vie des deux femmes est présentée comme une flamme, et elles sont comparées à des torches. Alors que la comtesse d’Anglure « rayonnait du bonheur qui la foudroyait » suite aux tendresses retrouvées, « la marquise perdait de son animation habituelle, du feu roulant de sa repartie, et jusque de l’éclat fulgurant de sa beauté » (115). Si *rayonner de bonheur* est une expression figée, son emploi littéral engendre une métaphore filée fondée sur l’isotopie du feu :

> On eût dit un singulier déplacement de la vie dans ces deux femmes, et que la chaleur et la flamme passaient de la torche éblouissante au pâle flambeau menacé de mourir. (115)

Mme des Gesvres est une torche éblouissante, Mme d’Anglure, malade, un pâle flambeau ; l’énergie vitale qui semble passer de l’une à l’autre, parallèlement à l’action de M. de Maulévrier, est la flamme qui pourrait les maintenir en vie. Barbey renouvelle ainsi la métaphore du feu pour

5 À propos de l’esthétique et de l’imaginaire décadents, voir Jean de Palacio 1994, 2000, 2007 et 2011.

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décrire le corps même de ses personnages. L’amour étant la flamme qui la tient en vie, Mme d’Anglure va s’éteindre naturellement lorsqu’elle ne sera plus aimée.

Dans *Une vieille maîtresse*, c’est Mme de Mendoze qui subit le destin tragique de la folie amoureuse. Chez elle aussi, la beauté est la première victime de ses peines d’amour : « La passion fit une horrible razzia de tous les dons qui ornaient sa vie » (222). Comme Mme d’Anglure, c’est un être délicat et fragile, qui semble destiné à la souffrance :

> Elle avait été le type d’un de ces genres de beauté évidemment prédestinés au malheur. […] Pour l’observateur philosophe, il était certain que le premier malheur de la vie déchirerait cette organisation ténue et diaphane. (222)

À cause de cette faiblesse, la souffrance du cœur engendre une souffrance physique et la jeune femme, abandonnée par Ryno, se montre en société en proie à « la fièvre, la toux convulsive d’une poitrine atteinte de consomption » (224). Les symptômes sont ceux d’une maladie pulmonaire et ils sont mis en rapport avec son amour désespéré : elle traîne dans les salons « un cœur désolé, une santé dévastée » (224), le parallèle rendant explicite le lien entre la souffrance intérieure et ses manifestations physiologiques. Le mal montre sa puissance destructrice et entraîne des conséquences fatales : la dame est « brisée, mourante, anéantie », le « maigre et pâle visage fondu au feu d’un mal intérieur », « deux grands yeux flétris, cernés, dévorés, sanglants d’insomnie et de pleurs… » (224). L’accumulation et la progression des adjectifs rendent la description pathétique et resserrent le lien entre la souffrance et ses causes psychologiques ; la passion agit comme un feu intérieur qui fond le visage et le corps de Mme de Mendoze, jusqu’à causer sa mort. La jeune femme porte d’ailleurs sur son visage un signe de ce feu secret : « l’ardeur sanguine de ses lèvres » implique que « le feu de la femme brûlait dans le corps vaporeusement opalisé du séraphin » (223). Cette lèvre rouge au milieu d’un visage pâle et suave est chargée d’une valeur significative parce qu’elle est héréditaire : c’est le signe du « sang flamand » qui se mêle « à la lymphatique race allemande » (223). Selon la théorie des tempéraments chère aux narrateurs naturalistes, la jeune femme aurait un tempérament sanguin-lymphatique,[6] mais Barbey délaisse cette classification pour mettre en place une isotopie du feu et du sang :

> Ce bouillonnement d’un sang qui arrosait si mystérieusement ce corps flave, et qui trahissait tout à coup sa rutilance sous le tissu pénétré des

6 Pour la théorie des tempéraments dans le roman réaliste et naturaliste cf. Cabanès 1991, 2: 259-305.

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> lèvres ; ce trait héréditaire et dépaysé dans ce suave et calme visage, était le sceau de pourpre d’une destinée. (223)

Mme de Mendoze porte donc sur son corps le sceau de sa prédestination pour l’amour malheureux et partage avec une autre grande héroïne aurevillienne l’héritage d’un bouillonnement de sang qui lui sera fatal. Comme elle, Jeanne de Feuardent, dans *L’Ensorcelée*, a hérité de ses ancêtres le feu de son nom de famille et un sang vivace « qui bouillonnait dans ce cœur vierge » (Barbey d’Aurevilly 1964, 609). Les deux femmes sont le fruit d’un croisement : Mme de Mendoze présente la blondeur et la pâleur de la race allemande et la lèvre bordeaux de la race flamande qui s’y est mêlée ; Jeanne, de son côté, hérite de la force d’âme de sa mère et du sang tempétueux de son père :

> Mais, pour le malheur de Jeanne-Madeleine, il s’y mêlait le sang des Feuardent, d’une race vieillie, ardente autrefois comme son nom, et ce sang devait produire en elle quelque inextinguible incendie, pour peu qu’il fût agité par cette vieille sorcière de Destinée qui remue si souvent nos passions dans nos veines endormies, avec un tison enflammé ! (615)

Barbey joue sur le nom du personnage associé aux figures du sang et du feu : ardent comme le feu contenu dans son nom, le sang de Jeanne est censé produire un incendie. L’idée de fatalité est doublement présente, sous la forme de l’héritage et de l’allégorie de la Destinée, qui remue les passions avec un tison allumé. La passion de Jeanne pour l’abbé et ses conséquences tragiques sont donc inscrites dans son destin. Quand la passion s’affiche sur son visage sous la forme d’une persistante couleur rouge, les figures du sang et du feu sont à nouveau évoquées pour décrire ce phénomène physiologique inouï :

> Le sang qu’elle avait tourné, croyait maître Tainnebouy, parla pour elle ! Il lui était monté du cœur à la tête le jour où elle avait rencontré l’abbé de la Croix-Jugan chez la Clotte, et jamais il n’en redescendit. Comme une torche humaine, que les yeux de ce prêtre extraordinaire auraient allumée, une couleur violente, couperose ardente de son sang soulevé, s’établit à poste fixe sur le beau visage de Jeanne-Madeleine. (650-1)

Le sang tourne, monte et se soulève, de la même façon que Mme d’Anglure le sent monter dans sa poitrine (223) : il est représenté dans sa dimension la plus concrète, celle d’un liquide qui bouillonne et envahit l’espace du corps du personnage. Le sang et le feu étant toujours liés, Jeanne devient une torche humaine, allumée par les yeux de l’abbé, et son « visage incendié » n’est que le reflet de son « cœur volcanisé » (651) : « sa vie était devenue un enfer caché, dont cette cruelle couleur rouge qu’elle

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portait au visage était la lueur » (651). Comme le précise Jacques Petit, l'expression « sa vie était devenue un enfer » est à prendre au pied de la lettre : Jeanne vit une passion infernale, puisqu'elle vient de la « puissance diabolique » de l'abbé, capable d'émouvoir les femmes (642). Cet enfer est caché mais son visage embrasé en donne un aperçu. Le destin malheureux de Jeanne est d'ailleurs préparé par l'histoire de Dlaïde Malgy, elle aussi perdue à cause de son amour pour l'abbé. Méprisée par la Croix Jugan, elle devient folle, puis elle tombe malade :

> La toux la prit. C'était la plus faible d'entre nous. Mais la maladie et son corps, qui se fondait comme un suif au feu, ne l'empêchèrent point de mener la vie que nous menions à Haut-Mesnil. Ce n'étaient pas des délicats que les débauchés qui y vivaient ! L'amour de la Malgy pour Jéhoël, sa maladie, sa maigreur, sa langueur, qu'elle enflammait en buvant du genièvre, comme on boit de l'eau quand on a soif, ce qui lui fit bientôt trembler les mains, bleuir les lèvres, perdre la voix, rien n'arrêta les forcenés dont elle était entourée. Ils aimaient, disaient-ils, à monter dans le clocher quand il brûle ! Et ils se passaient de main en main cette mourante, dont chacun prenait sa bouchée, cette fille consumée, qui flambait encore par-dedans, mais pas pour eux ! (642)

La progression des symptômes est à peu près la même que pour les autres mortes d'amour : la toux, la maigreur, la langueur, à quoi s'ajoutent les conséquences d'une vie de débauche. La métaphore du feu est reprise dans la comparaison crue qui voit la Malgy fondre comme un morceau de graisse, dans le récit de sa débauche et dans le récit de la Clotte : la jeune fille mourante « flambait [...] par-dedans ». Le corps extenué par la maladie et par les excès est encore représenté comme flambant, la figure du feu constituant le fil rouge de la description.

L'histoire de Dlaïde Malgy est une sorte d'anticipation et d'avertissement pour Jeanne, de la même façon que la vision de Mme de Mendoze souffrante est un mauvais présage pour Hermangarde. Ces passionnées sans frein, dont le corps est marqué par la passion et par la consomption et que la société juge compromises, ont la fonction de préfigurer le destin des héroïnes : Hermangarde souffre d'une douleur sourde et muette, Jeanne d'une passion dévoratrice qui ne peut s'éteindre qu'avec la mort, et les deux femmes sont marquées pour toujours par la puissance destructrice de l'amour.

D'ailleurs, cet amour absolu et fatal n'est pas décrit ni analysé. Bien que l'amour joue un rôle fondamental dans les textes aurevilliens, aucune place n'est accordée à la description ou à l'analyse des sentiments. La passion reste inexplicable et inexpliquée, la plupart du temps elle n'est même pas avouée, les mots n'étant pas en mesure d'exprimer sa profondeur et sa force. Elle reste une « sensation sans nom », représentée par les figures du sang et du feu.

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> La sensation sans nom que le romancier s'attache à définir dans ses récits à travers une rêverie substantielle de la flamme, lui permet d'éluder toute analyse psychologique reposant sur une sémiologie traditionnelle. Un ensemble d'images complémentaires s'y substitue, qui ouvre des nouvelles perspectives : le langage du symbole, plus proche de l'expression mythique, remplace le *logos*, le discours organisé. (Auraix-Jonchière 1997, 90-1)

Le discours métaphorique et symbolique remplace le discours rationnel en même temps que les manifestations du corps remplacent les mots : le discours amoureux est assumé par le corps, où s'incarne et se donne à voir la puissance totalisante de la passion.

7 Conclusions

La représentation du corps souffrant, et notamment du corps féminin, résulte d'une combinaison de traits descriptifs relevant du domaine de la physiologie et de traits métaphoriques et symboliques. Le corps des héroïnes aurevilliennes échappe aux limites de la représentation physiologique tout comme leur âme échappe aux analyses psychologiques. Barbey crée en effet des personnages exceptionnels, extraordinaires, grandioses même dans le mal, dont le caractère et les motivations ne peuvent être expliqués de façon rationnelle. Créatures contradictoires, voire oxymoriques, consacrant leur vie à des passions sublimes ou à des crimes monstrueux, ces personnages gardent un côté mystérieux et inexplicable ; le voile ne peut jamais être entièrement levé et le corps ne constitue pas une surface complètement lisible. « Face à ces créatures impossibles, la preuve est faite de l'insuffisance des connaissances scientifiques et rationnelles : il n'est d'autre recours que le surnaturel » (Glaudes 2007, 129). C'est dans cette dimension surnaturelle qu'il faut rechercher la clé de lecture du personnage aurevillien. Si dans certains œuvres une interprétation de la souffrance en termes religieux, et notamment en termes de sacrifice d'expiation, est suggérée par le texte,[7] dans d'autres c'est plutôt la présence du mal qui se fait remarquer. C'est que Barbey, disciple de Joseph de Maistre et de Balzac, veut montrer la présence du mal dans la réalité et dans la société, où il est caché derrière le rideau des apparences sans être pour cela moins puissant.[8] Les souffrantes aurevilliennes vivent dans

7 Nous pensons à la mort de Calixte dans *Un prêtre marié*, où la jeune fille expie les fautes du père sacrilège. Pour la présence de l'intertexte mystique dans les descriptions de Calixte agonisante, cf. Sermadiras 2016, 275-9.

8 À propos de la conception aurevillienne du mal et de l'influence maistrienne cf. Glaudes 2009, 17-45, ch. I « Barbey d'Aurevilly antimoderne. L'héritage maistrien » ; Glaudes 2007, 121-46.

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leur corps la présence de ce mal qui les corrompt et les détruit. Victimes d'une prédestination au malheur, elles portent la souffrance inscrite dans leur chair comme le péché originel est inscrit dans le cœur humain. Il est remarquable que même les personnages les plus sublimes, les jeunes filles les plus idéales, n'échappent pas au pouvoir du mal. Comme l'affirme Pierre Glaudes en analysant les représentations du sublime chez Barbey,

> [l]e sublime aurevillien ne s'accomplit donc pas en montrant l'éclat surhumain de rares créatures célestes qui font honneur à notre condition : il semble trouver, au contraire, un surcroit de force dans le spectacle de la souffrance, lorsque ces mêmes créatures, apparemment diminuées par de pénibles expériences, manifestent encore leur grandeur dans le silence, la solitude et le consentement au sacrifice. (Glaudes 2009, 134)

Le spectacle de la souffrance contribue à la création d'une registre sublime de la représentation, en accord avec ce que Glaudes appelle « l'esthétique doloriste » de Barbey (135). Mais ces figures de l'innocence blessée cachent souvent un côté troublant : victimes du mal de ce monde, elles le portent aussi en elles-mêmes. Coupables d'un amour idolâtre ou profane, dominées par une passion dévorante ou porteuses d'un pouvoir de séduction dangereux, elles sont toutes caractérisées par une ambigüité, une dimension inquiétante qui les fait basculer du côté des Diaboliques. Le mal qui couve dans leur cœur, parfois sous les apparences trompeuses de la jeunesse et de la beauté, est souvent représenté par la métaphore du « bouton de pourriture », de « la tâche de gangrène » (1964, 16) du « cancer » enseveli dans la poitrine (348). Marquées par cette faute originelle, les héroïnes voient leur corps pourrir de l'intérieur, se figer dans une immobilité de statue, brûler ou se dissoudre dans la consomption. Le corps féminin est le lieu où le mal s'incarne et montre son pouvoir destructeur mais il est aussi symbole d'un monde qui est en train de s'écrouler sous les secousses de l'histoire. Dans le monde aurevillien, aucun enfantement heureux n'est possible. Dans un monde révolu dont on ne voit que les derniers vestiges, le corps féminin n'est jamais fertile. Les corps pâles et suaves des nobles dames se fondent et se dissolvent avec le passé auquel ils appartiennent, secoués par les passions extraordinaires que Barbey a voulu y insuffler.

Les éléments physiologiques et cliniques que Barbey insère dans ses descriptions ont la fonction de rendre plus concret et visible, presque tangible, ce mal qui prend possession des corps, cette destruction à laquelle ils sont voués. D'autre part, ils fonctionnent comme le pivot autour duquel peut se développer la caractérisation métaphorique des personnages : les métaphores et les comparaisons les plus frappantes se fondent sur des éléments corporels – la peau, le sang – pris dans leur dimension la plus concrète, la plus physique. Non seulement la description physiologique

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et la caractérisation métaphorique des personnages coexistent et sont complémentaires, mais elles se compénètrent et se nourrissent l’une l’autre, les deux registres de la représentation n’étant pas séparables.

Le corps et l’âme des personnages ne sont pas non plus séparables. S’il existe un rapport de cause-conséquence ou d’analogie entre la vie physique du personnage et sa vie psychologique, les deux états étant étroitement liés, il n’est pas concevable de s’arrêter sur l’un sans essayer de percer le mystère de l’autre : ce que Barbey reproche à la littérature réaliste et naturaliste, c’est précisément un manque de profondeur, une façon d’insister sur la nature organique de l’homme qui exclut toute recherche de l’intangible et du transcendant. Pour Barbey, ce sont les mystères de l’âme qui déterminent la vie et la mort du personnage et que le romancier se doit de montrer :

> Mais l’âme de ces clowns, qui ont une âme, et qui, comme tous ceux qui en ont une, vont souffrir et mourir de leur âme, M. de Goncourt ne la montre pas dans sa beauté, ne la creuse pas dans sa profondeur, ne la dramatise pas dans son action et dans sa destinée. (1968, 71)

Telle est, en négatif, la poétique aurevillienne : creuser la profondeur, dramatiser l’action, montrer la destinée d’une âme, puisque c’est de l’âme que l’on souffre et que l’on meurt.

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As 'vidas' de Jorge de Lima

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Abstract The Brazilian poet Jorge Lima, better known for his relation with surrealist aesthetics and popular culture, wrote several lives of saints that depart from the Brazilian modernist context. Although Catholicism is sometimes manifest in his poetic works, these 'lives' constitute a point of antagonism for their informative prose and for their selective restrictions on images. By their supposed imitation of divinity and their abandonment of the self, the texts *Anchieta*, *Dom Vital* and *A vida extraordinária de Santo Antônio*are related both to the Spanish mysticism of San Juan de la Cruz, and to the Christian rhetoric of the *sermo humilis* as deployed by Jesuit colonial authors. The article aims to investigate some parallels between previous hagiographies and Lima's texts as well as to demonstrate how these modernist 'lives' inevitably fail in their attempt to manifest their humble vocabulary and imagery, performing a paradoxical auto-hagiography.

Keywords Jorge de Lima. Lives. Modernism. Hagiography. Autobiography.

1 As 'vidas' no cenário modernista

A obra de Jorge de Lima (1893-1953) é principalmente associada à aproximação de temas populares com a liberdade formal legada pelas principais vanguardas do século XX, destacando-se, entre outros textos, os livros de poemas *Novos Poemas* (1929), *Túnica Inconsútil* (1938), *Poemas Negros* (1947) ou *Invenção de Orfeu* (1952), apesar de também ter escrito em prosa, especialmente romances, como o surrealista *O Anjo* (1934b) ou um livro marcado por seu catolicismo, como *Guerra dentro do beco* (1950). Há, no entanto, um conjunto de textos que narram vidas de santos que praticamente são intocados pela crítica, possivelmente pelo grande teor de religiosidade, de informatividade, bem como pela linguagem supostamente pouco marcada por autoria. Esse trabalho procura estudá-los de maneira mais detida a partir de uma comparação com a tradição hagiográfica cristã, além de analisar suas questões formais e de recontextualizar devidamente seus lugares na cultura brasileira. A partir desse gesto, torna-se possível problematizar os paradoxos de uma poética de humildade, cuja escrita se propõe a evitar marcas autorais em

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uma atitude expressa de antiesteticismo. Essas vidas de Jorge de Lima, mesmo que não explicitem, possuem uma estética própria e, por mais que busquem evitar traços de autoria, apresentam em sua pretensa hagiografia certo teor autobiográfico. O primeiro texto nesse propósito é *Anchieta*,[1] publicado em 1934 pela editora Civilização Brasileira, que trata justamente da vida de religioso, de professor, de mediador e de missionário que teria sido cofundador das cidades de São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro. O segundo texto que se destaca nesse mesmo aspecto de vida de santo foi a do beato Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira, cujo título foi simplesmente *D. Vital*,[2] publicado em 1945 pela editora Agir na coleção «Nossos grandes mortos», promovida pelo Ministério da Educação sob a administração de Gustavo Capanema. O terceiro analisado foi *A vida extraordinária de Santo Antônio*, livro infantil ilustrado publicado pelas edições Melhoramentos em 1954, mas que curiosamente pode ser lido conforme o gênero «vida».

Durante praticamente três décadas, Jorge de Lima se empenhou em compor vidas de santos. Embora Dom Vital, à época, não houvesse sido beatificado e o próprio Anchieta ainda não houvesse sido canonizado, o gênero é praticamente o mesmo e, inclusive, os escritos cumprem um papel importante de divulgação de elementos de suposta santidade. *Anchieta*, a primeira dessas obras, começou a ser escrita em um momento de recristianização de uma ampla parcela da intelectualidade brasileira na primeira metade do século XX. Conforme os estudos de Sergio Miceli (1979), Cândido Moreira Rodrigues (2005) ou Margareth Todaro Williams (1971), a partir de 1921, ocorre uma mobilização de leigos do catolicismo no Rio de Janeiro em torno principalmente da revista *A Ordem*, da divulgação da encíclica papal *Pax Christi in Regno Christi*, de 1922, e da fundação do Centro Dom Vital no mesmo ano. Nessa iniciativa, despontam personalidades que realizam um trabalho cultural em prol da hierarquia católica, como Jackson de Figueiredo, Alceu Amoroso Lima, Perillo Gomes ao lado de artistas com intervenções mais sofisticadas e com uma religiosidade mais espontânea, como o pintor Ismael Nery ou os poetas Vinícius de Morais, Murilo Mendes e o próprio Jorge de Lima. As vidas compostas por este último, portanto, não destoam de sua própria

1 José de Anchieta (1534-1597) foi um jesuíta espanhol que, ainda jovem, veio ao Brasil auxiliar Manuel da Nóbrega na conversão e evangelização dos índios. Legou a primeira gramática do idioma Tupi, além de uma vasta obra composta por poemas, textos dramáticos e tratados em latim, português e tupi. Foi um dos fundadores da cidade de São Paulo e do Rio de Janeiro a par das campanhas de colonização portuguesas. Foi canonizado em 2014.

2 Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira (1844-1878) foi um religioso Capuchinho natural do atual estado da Paraíba que, em vida, enquanto Bispo de Olinda, empreendeu uma vasta campanha contra a maçonaria nos órgãos de governo e até na hierarquia da Igreja, a qual ficou conhecida como Questão Religiosa. Após haver sido encarcerado por suas posições ortodoxas, conseguiu que sua voz fosse escutada pelo próprio Papa em 1875. Encontra-se em processo de beatificação e canonização.

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biografia ao passo que a escrita de textos estéticos com fins religiosos pode ser considerada uma exceção no cenário cultural brasileiro da época.

É bem verdade que Jorge de Lima é também lembrado pela sua relação com as vanguardas, tais como o surrealismo. Acerca dessa aproximação entre religiosidade e modernismo, Luciano Dias Cavalcanti, acerca do autor, relembra que «a aproximação aparentemente paradoxal de um autor católico com o surrealismo encontra um ponto de convergência no uso que o poeta faz de elementos formais surrealistas» (Cavalcanti 2014, 82). Nesse aspecto, haveria em sua escrita religiosa uma superação do louvor e do mero conservadorismo pelo emprego da montagem, do automatismo e da perspectiva visionária. De fato, ao mesmo tempo em que publicava seus textos religiosos como *Dom Vital* ou *Anchieta*, o autor já preparava seu trabalho com fotomontagens, intitulado *A Pintura em Pânico*, que reunia fragmentos de imagens de maneira anárquica, o que, em parte, coincidia com as artes de vanguarda, que interessavam-no profundamente. Ainda assim, convém lembrar que o catolicismo não é apenas um tema para Jorge de Lima, mas também um dispositivo de escrita. A esse respeito, é comum se relacionar a filosofia essencialista de Ismael Nery[3] como a principal motivadora da reunião de Lima entre catolicismo e surrealismo, de maneira que as repetições, uma retórica da humildade e a inclusão de elementos de religiosidade popular não são resultados lógicos de uma técnica vanguardista. Antes, esses elementos podem ser compreendidos como expressão artística muito singular (ainda que não se anuncie como tal) e como produção de diversas intertextualidades com a própria Bíblia, com as crônicas jesuíticas sobre José de Anchieta, com a poesia de seu tempo e com algumas composições místicas do catolicismo.

3 A relação cristã mais imediata e mais comentada em Jorge de Lima foi a relação de amizade que manteve com o pintor Ismael Nery até sua morte em 1034. Embora normalmente Murilo Mendes tenha sido aquele que mais se comprometeu em divulgar a pintura e a poesia do amigo paraense morto, Jorge de Lima também possui vínculos importantes com essa figura obscura das artes brasileiras. Nery, que conheceu pessoalmente André Breton, foi quem colocou Jorge de Lima em contato com as principais vanguardas europeias da mesma maneira que o fez voltar à escrita religiosa, especialmente pelo impacto de seu «essencialismo», doutrina espiritual que, até onde se sabe, constituiria um primeiro passo para um catolicismo renovado cuja maior proposta estava na abstração do tempo e do espaço. Contudo, as fontes católicas de Jorge de Lima vão muito além de Ismael Nery. A esse respeito, assim como a respeito da relação de Lima com Murilo Mendes, consultar Fábio de Souza Andrade (1993).

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2 Uma estética da simplicidade

Dentre as principais conexões de Jorge de Lima com a tradição católica, destaca-se a problemática do maravilhoso, que consiste em um distintivo do discurso hagiográfico. Conforme salienta Michel de Certeau (1982), haveria, de um lado, o gênero ‘biográfico’, que registrava os feitos de religiosos por uma escrita mais elegante e com certa lógica, normalmente destinado ao clero e aos mais letrados; por outro lado, as vidas, ou as «hagiografias» propriamente ditas, eram textos de autoria geralmente duvidosa porque não contavam com algum suporte clerical, constituindo-se antes em discursos fabulosos, em linguagem simples e com abertura à religiosidade popular, sendo destinadas aos leigos ou ao tempo de ócio dos próprios clérigos. O maior exemplo de hagiografia é a Lenda Dourada (*Legenda Aurea*), com diversas vidas de santo reunidas por Tiago de Voragine por volta de 1260, tendo sido difundida por toda a Europa medieval até vir a ser combatida por setores eclesiásticos a partir do século XVI. Nesse tipo de texto, as descrições populares de milagres, fabulações maravilhosas, como a de São Jorge vencendo o dragão, e a estipulação de santos para cada dia do calendários eram muito salientes, ao passo que, nas biografias de santo, mais pudicas, o exemplo moral sobressaía sobre qualquer narrativa ou descrição de verossimilhança duvidosa. Nessa duplicidade entre as vidas sérias e as vidas sensacionalistas, Jorge de Lima não opta irrevogavelmente por algum dos dois modelos, havendo manifestações de ambas as tendências. Aliás, muitas vezes, essas duas posições se opõem, de maneira que a figuração do maravilhoso é enunciada, ainda que de modo sereno ou com o fim de torná-la inoperante. As vidas de Jorge de Lima são prosas que concomitantemente apresentam momentos informativos, narrativos e evangelizadores. Assim como na hagiografia em geral, os textos apresentam certa simplicidade no vocabulário, inevitavelmente lidam com a figuração de milagres e, acima de tudo, estabelecem um discurso axiológico no qual a vida serve como um exemplo de conduta. Embora essas hagiografias modernas de Lima retomem o gênero de maneira híbrida e relacionem diversas intertextualidades no campo da história, da poesia, da teologia e até da medicina, ainda assim, não podem ser considerados textos exatamente experimentais. Antes disso, apresentam as biografias de cada santo conforme uma ordem cronológica e sem uma retórica exuberante, de modo que, sem a esperada relevância, os feitos milagrosos esperados surgem apenas no fechamento dos textos como um mero detalhe.

A maior profusão de milagres nessas vidas de Jorge de Lima se dá justamente na *Vida extraordinária de Santo Antônio*. Mas isso apenas acontece por se tratar de um livro infantil, no qual as figurações maravilhosas podem ser melhor aceitas dada a abrangência restrita do livro e sua direção a leitores em formação. Ainda assim, os milagres narrados

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aparecem de maneira discreta, quase perdendo sua extraordinariedade, em grande parte pelas repetições de termos e pela simplicidade vocabular com a qual são anunciados, a ponto de se naturalizar a narração sobre peixes que escutam ou mesmo algumas descrições descontextualizadas, como a de submarinos. Todas essa linguagem figurada leva a descrição pormenorizada dos peixes a significar um sentido de distribuição da palavra religiosa, algo comum ao próprio gênero hagiográfico.

Enormes peixes obesos ali estavam com seus movimentos lentos; e peixes do rio com suas cristas pontiagudas escutavam também; cardumes de bagres acorriam, o dorso aflorando às águas como periscópios de submarinos, que felizmente naquele tempo ninguém conhecia; até peixes cegos do fundo do mar, peixes luminescentes, vermelhos, verdes, azuis, peixes voadores, agulhas, peixes de grandes barbatanas como velas de barco, peixinhos pequenos, habitantes de exíguas locas e espadartes armados de guerras, todos eles foram chegando para ouvir Antônio. E todos estavam em paz, como reconciliados (Lima 1954, 44).

Se, portanto, as imagens das vidas de Jorge de Lima são relativamente serenas em relação à sugestão de sentido religioso, inclusive para o que se esperaria de um livro infantil, isso não implica afirmar que a linguagem não apresente suas próprias peculiaridades, perpassando o esperado para o próprio gênero hagiográfico. Sua prosa é profundamente marcada pelos paralelismos, isto é, por repetições de palavras que causam um efeito rítmico. Tome-se como exemplo a descrição de Dom Vital, a qual, para adjetivar o beato, elabora uma série de iterações por meio do significante 'espanto', bem como por meio dos advérbios terminados em 'mente' e também pelas assonâncias com a letra 'e'.

Um homem de espanto – um jovem, doente, fraco, capaz de enfrentar as maiores forças do mundo de então: a maçonaria e o governo. Era de espantar! E verdadeiramente o humilíssimo franciscano espantou o erro, espantou o regalismo, espantou a corrupção dos seus juízes, espantou os seus carcereiros, os seus algozes, espantou a força, espantou o rei. E um dia o santo papa Pio IX, verdadeiramente espantado de possuir pastor tão forte e espantoso, desce de seu trono, quebra toda a praxe adotada nas recepções, abraçando brasileiramente a D. Vital, põe-se a exclamar comovido: «Mio caro Olinda! Mio caro Olinda!» (Lima 1945, 15-16)

Não se trata apenas da representação do quão 'espantoso' era Dom Vital, mas de criar efetivamente um espanto no leitor ao fazer da própria linguagem um meio de expressão de algo fora da comunicação convencional. Assim, Jorge de Lima confere um tom poético à prosa sem necessariamente recorrer ao verso. O mesmo é possível de ser observado na vida de Anchieta, quando as repetições em «vem» são contrastadas com representações paradoxais de atitudes dos jesuítas na colonização do Brasil: «A tudo se estende o bojo da caridade, sangrando ou bordando com o contraponto *flores* e *collores* para o selvagem. Dava música, dava

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canivetinhos, dava a bondade, dava um remédio de casca de pau; vem Tupinambá; vem! – dava um espelhinho; vem, tamoyo, vem! vem caeté! vem, carijó! vam, Brasil! – anestesiava o índio, tirava o coração vivo para Jesus» (LIMA, 1934, 96). Considerando-se os estudos de Roman Jakobson (1970) sobre a retomada dos antigos paralelismos por parte da poesia moderna, é possível afirmar que Jorge de Lima, ao menos nesse aspecto, não promoveu uma textualidade dogmática ou antiquada. Muito pelo contrário, ela reivindica as liberdades formais do modernismo ao mesmo tempo em que abandona a paródia das vanguardas em relação à tradição, justamente para dialogar com outras textualidades de outros tempos.

Mesmo assim, a despeito do aspecto formal dos paralelismos, conforme as reflexões de Jakobson, as conclusões de Agamben (2000) em *O tempo que resta* estabelecem uma investida histórico-filológica sobre o tema ao afirmar que os exageros de paralelismos são próprios da tradição cristã, mais exatamente a partir das epístolas de São Paulo. Segundo o autor, o *Novo Testamento* teria sido o princípio do nascimento das rimas na literatura ocidental. Muitas vezes essas anáforas da poesia de Jorge de Lima da época de suas hagiografias estabelecem a aproximação de contrários, possibilitando a percepção de certa intertextualidade com a poesia mística espanhola de São João da Cruz. A junção de imagens contrastantes e de certa comutação entre o voo do vento e a queda, em um fluxo de desejo erótico se fazem presentes no poema «Na Carreira do Vento», que compôs o livros *Tempo e Eternidade*, publicado em 1935 e reunindo também poemas de Murilo Mendes: «Lá vem o vento reboando | com seus cavalos motores | voando nos aviões. | Lá vem progresso, poeira, | carreira velocidade. | Lá vem nas asas do vento, | o lamento da saudade | reboando reboando» (Lima, Mende 1935, 18). No poema, cada uma das estrofes termina com as palavras «reboando reboando». A figuração principal é a do voo e do espírito em contraste com a queda do homem, que vem nas metáforas da saudade, de Satanás ou simplesmente do progresso. Esses paralelismos, típicos de poesias populares, foram cultivados por São João da Cruz, como em seu poema «A lo divino». No texto, todas as estrofes terminam em que «le di a la caza alcance». No mais, a temática é a queda em razão de um voo que era ilusão, precipitando a queda: «Cuanto más alto llegaba | de este lance tan subido, | tanto más bajo y rendido | y abatido me hallaba; | dije: ‘no habrá quién alcance’ | y abatíme tanto tanto, | que fui tan alto tan alto, | que le di a la caza alcance» (Cruz 2003, 126). As repetições com capacidade de conferir ritmo, tanto em Jorge de Lima quanto em João da Cruz, transpõem, acima de tudo, a temática da queda para uma expressão poética cuja linguagem também remete à descida ao mundo, o que se manifesta em seu tom prosaico, nos elementos populares e nas figurações em choque.

Além do encontro de imagens em Jorge de Lima, salta à vista uma simplicidade vocabular marcada e até mesmo um mimetismo direto

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das crônicas jesuíticas, que eram pouco afeitas à retórica de portentos. Variados textos jesuíticos, como a autobiografia de Loyola até a vida de Anchieta escrita por Simão de Vasconcelos, que estava na bibliografia do *Anchieta* de Jorge de Lima, mantêm certa causalidade natural e dão pouco destaque ao milagre, ao contrário do exemplo de seus exemplos de atitudes morais, que eram arduamente defendidos. Para Socorro Fática Pilar (2006, 87), que estudou as representações de Anchieta ao longo da história, os jesuítas tiveram um papel fundamental na rejeição da antiga hagiografia e foram um dos responsáveis pela defesa da causalidade mundana desde o Concílio de Trento, entre 1545 e 1563. Nesse ato, os intelectuais católicos começaram a contestar a legitimidade das *Acta sanctorum* justamente pela falta de precisão histórica. Assim, Jorge de Lima não se afasta da escrita católica quando seus textos fogem ao dogma para privilegiar certa verossimilhança histórica, mas é justamente nessa atitude que praticamente mimetiza a escrita jesuítica oficial.

Dirigidos por essa pretensão de precisão histórica, os testemunhos de milagres não deixam de existir no texto de Jorge de Lima, senão que aparecem para ser imediatamente considerados crendices ou, pelo menos, fatos supérfluos. Porém, mesmo que sob cuidados, sobrevivem alguns portentos e, principalmente, elementos de religiosidade popular. Essa característica muitas vezes foi tornada julgamento de valor negativo para o poeta alagoano, especialmente ao contrastá-lo com a poesia mais intelectualizada de Murilo. Apesar de haver ressaltado o folclórico e até alguns ecos afro-brasileiros nas palavras de Jorge de Lima, o antropólogo francês Roger Bastide consolidou na fortuna crítica de Lima certo entendimento de hermetismo – e até uma preguiça – no autor, o que supostamente o impediria de ascender a uma religiosidade mais profunda. Para Bastide, «ele não quer saber de um cristianismo metafísico, escatológico e transcendente; sua religião forma um único todo com seu bairrismo, seu afeto ao passado, seu regionalismo literário» (Bastide 1997, 121).

Independentemente do juízo de valor que se lhe queira conferir, vale afirmar que a escrita em prosa de Jorge de Lima, tanto quanto aquela em versos, não necessariamente chega a ser puramente intuitiva. Muito pelo contrário, ela se nutre de uma religiosidade popular, de uma escrita anárquica e, sobretudo, se insere na rejeição da retórica classicista, analogamente às reivindicações de uma escrita pobre, isto é, do *sermo humilis*, de boa parte da tradição literária do cristianismo. Vale ressaltar, a esse respeito que, contrariamente ao *sermo gravis*, o *sermo humilis* teria sido a rejeição da eloquência e das grandes figuras retóricas para o privilégio de uma simplicidade vocabular, destacando a profundidade sentimental e a riqueza imagética. Tanto os primeiros textos da patrísticas quanto a tradução da Bíblia por São Jerônimo são exemplos de que a humildade verbal seria mais adequada para a disseminação do cristianismo primitivo e para sua própria distinção com relação à literatura clássica

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greco-romana. Para Auerbach, no século V, «surge um novo *sermo humilis*, um estilo baixo do tipo que seria aplicável [anteriormente] somente à sátira e à comédia, mas que ora se estende muito além do seu território original, atingindo o mais elevado e o mais profundo, até o mais sublime e o eterno» (2009, 62). O filólogo Friedrich Ohly foi ainda mais específico no assunto, afirmando que, ante a literalidade, o que o *sermo humilis* privilegiaria seria o sentido espiritual da letra: «A confusão babélica das línguas continua apenas no sentido literal delas, já que ela se resolve pelo sentido espiritual da palavra – que deve ser elidido das coisas – e que é comum a todas as línguas» (Ohly 2005, 20, tradução do Autor). A partir da hipótese de Ohly, pode-se pensar que a contenção de figuras de linguagem nas hagiografias de Jorge de Lima e a repetição de palavras para criar paralelismos dentro da prosa nada mais seriam do que a reinvenção de uma escrita pobre, cujas consequências podem suscitar novas reflexões sobre aspectos pouco usuais de sua prosa e, inclusive, fornecer novos subsídios para a compreensão de sua poesia.

3 A infantilidade do *sermo humilis* e a negação da autoria

As vidas de Jorge de Lima elaboram um condicionamento de sentido na medida em que procuram evitar traços individualistas e também por buscar conformar suas imagens pela explicitação de alegorias. Esse jogo entre estabelecer figurações para, logo em seguida, ocultá-las, é a maior força de suas vidas. Seus textos almejam abrir caminho para um sujeito do texto, que deve sempre ser evitado, em um procedimento que supera o didatismo e o moralismo do gênero para reforçar os contrastes da cultura brasileira a partir dos fragmentos de religiosidade popular e de uma expressão verbal que prima pelo inacabamento. Essa rejeição da própria singularidade certamente poderia ser muito discreta, tendo em vista a própria impessoalidade, muita vezes, é evitada em determinados gêneros de prosa. Na poesia de Jorge de Lima, especialmente na religiosa, essa característica é fundamental, a exemplo de quando o poeta estabelece justaposição de passagens bíblicas, que são complementadas com frases doadoras de chaves interpretativas, como em «Amo a solidão»: «Amo as terras de Deus onde os profetas andaram | e onde meu pacto fiz com a suprema Presença | e serei holocausto ante a Força das Forças» (Lima, Mendes 1935, 38). A afirmação de amar as Terras de Deus e de considerá-las como aquelas nas quais os profetas andaram visa estabelecer uma estabilidade semântica oferecendo referente geográfico ao lugar poético abstrato. Logo, os textos hagiográficos, ainda que não sejam prosas poéticas em sentido estrito, apresentam uma linguagem na qual o tom sereno, a verossimilhança das descrições e o sentido figurado do enredo visam superar seu teor fantástico. Em outras palavras, a narratividade

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busca domar as investidas de variados tropos, especialmente a metáfora ou a catacrese.

Os paralelismos, nessa prosa da resignação e não do virtuosismo, não perfazem experimentação, mas elaboram uma utopia de uma linguagem *naif*, de um *sermo humilis*, que pretende reunir fragmentos literais de passagens bíblicas, referências biográficas e elementos de religiosidade popular. Em *Anchieta*, por exemplo, o autor define os índios para pensar em uma infantilidade da linguagem. Não fornece, porém, dados ou fontes escritas para comprovar sua tese. Em vez disso, mimetiza a escrita de criança para chamar a atenção do leitor e, sucessivamente, opinar sobre o potencial de uma religiosidade inacabada e imperfeita. «Aquela gente era criança. E nas crianças ninguém pode corrigir crianças da noite para o dia. Nós ainda somos crianças também em catolicismo. Não pensem que eu estou desgostoso com isto. Não estou não, Jesus até gostava era das crianças» (Lima 1934, 45). A passagem, que remete ao célebre «Deixai as criancinhas virem a mim e não as impeçais, pois delas é o Reino de Deus» (Lc. 18, 16-17), aposta também no inacabamento como uma potência da religiosidade. Mas não se pode deixar de perceber a busca por estabilidade semântica ao afirmar uma alegoria dessa infantilidade recorrendo às palavras de Cristo.

Aliás, na literatura infantil, Jorge de Lima não poupa certa metalinguagem a esse respeito quando, ao narrar a vida de Santo Antônio, no episódio em que este oferece seu sermão aos peixes. Novamente, célebres passagens bíblicas são entrelaçadas com elementos biográficos e com religiosidade popular. O que era a infância no sermão sobre Anchieta, agora se vê deslocado para a animalidade, na qual o santo vê mais promessa de filiação e disseminação da palavra do que entre os próprios homens. Dirigindo-se aos peixes, afirma Antônio de Pádua:

Nosso senhor misericordioso, quando vos criou, vos deu ordem para crescer e multiplicar e deu-vos a sua bênção; pois durante o dilúvio geral, todos os outros animais morreram, e a vós somente Deus conservou. E ainda vos deu liberdade, barbatanas para irdes onde for de vosso agrado. A vós foi concedido por ordem de Deus conservar o profeta Jonas e depois do terceiro dia lança-lo em terra, são e salvo. Oferecemos certa vez uma moeda a Nosso Senhor que, pobrezinho, nada possuía para pagar o censo. (Lima 1954, 44).

Continua o autor, para ressaltar a potencialidade de ecoar a palavra de Deus em uma animalidade: «Antônio, vendo os peixes tão dóceis, disse em alta voz: 'Bendito seja Deus eterno, porque mais o honram os peixes que os homens, e melhor escutam a sua palavra os bichos que as criaturas infiéis'» (Lima 1954, 45). Se a infância é uma forma de articular diversos fragmentos bíblicos e biográficos nas vidas de Jorge de Lima, a religiosidade e a fala popular cumprem, nesses textos, um importante papel de contenção de imagens e de tentativa de ocultar sua própria singularidade.

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Em alguns momentos do texto *Anchieta*, o narrador envereda por falas e juízos simplificadores de afirmações pretensamente informativas que fizera anteriormente. Por volta da página 47, aduz que os nativos brasileiros eram crianças e que os jesuítas se aproveitaram da situação não para fazê-los compreender a religião, mas que o objetivo deles era «primeiro fazer o índio gostar de religião» (Lima 1934, 46). Já à página 97, portanto em um intervalo considerável de texto, o narrador transforma a informação anterior em um juízo genérico, como se fosse uma opinião do senso comum compartilhada por toda a nação brasileira em oposição aos indígenas:

> Querer encontrar beleza nas composições de nossos índios não se pode. Eles apenas arremedavam os ruídos dos bichos, certos rumores já misteriosos que vinham das matas misturados com essa tristeza tirada de quando o sol o descamba. Porque abalante mesmo só a música que os missionários arranjavam nos cravos, nas vidas, nos cânticos bonitos. Isso amolecia qualquer Cunhambeba. […] adeus Tupã, adeus Anhangám adeus música de guerra e feitiçaria. (Lima 1934, 97)

Essa infantilização propositai da compreensão da música indígena não se dá apenas quanto à temática, mas na própria linguagem, dado que proliferam palavras manifestamente coloquiais (descamba, bonitos, amolecia) em relação ao restante da obra. Essa conformação vocabular das vidas de Jorge de Lima pretende apaziguar as figurações do exótico e do miraculoso em um sentido moralizador final ou em alguma chave hermenêutica, reunido, de um modo próprio, fragmentos de cultura. Conforme Michel de Certeau, uma linguagem simples destinada à popularização e um sentido axiológico não almeja a descrição histórica pormenorizada, mas o *exemplo*, uma característica própria da escrita hagiográfica (cf. Certeau 1982, 241-54). O propósito desse conjunto, no entanto, pode ter um fim não apenas evangelizador, mas o de uma escrita que, paradoxalmente, faz de seu próprio desaparecimento sua maior marca singular. Para Alfredo Bosi, na escrita de Jorge de Lima, «a simultaneidade das imagens evocadas mimetiza o sentimento do perene que transcende a fugacidade dos momentos sucessivos no tempo do relógio. Em outras palavras: a eternidade supera – conservando dialeticamente – o tempo» (Bosi 2016, 191). Enquanto Bosi compreendeu a lida com os fragmentos em Jorge de Lima em um sentido abstrato, porém metafísico, também se pode pensar as constantes retensões imagéticas e líricas das vidas de Jorge de Lima enquanto figurações de neutralidade.

Não apenas na poesia e nas hagiografias essa característica de indecidibilidade se manifestou. Na ensaística do autor, chega a ser percebida alguma teorização poética nesse sentido, quando ele reivindica a eternidade da liturgia em relação à efemeridade da subjetividade. No artigo «A Mística e a Poesia», Jorge de Lima pensa uma escrita do abandono

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de si, recorrendo, para tanto, à teoria de Romano Guardini para prescrever uma escrita da contenção na qual o poeta «pode sublimar a mentira com a sua imaginação e é obrigado a se conter diante da única Verdade» (Lima 1935b, 15). Conclui que o poeta «é um rebelado e entretanto não deve imitar a rebeldia do anjo poeta que se chamava – ‘a mesma luz de Deus’. É geralmente um narciso, mas jamais deverá dizer ‘Eu’: – la liturgie ne dit pas ‘Je’ mais ‘Nous’» (Lima 1935b, 15). Roland Barthes, a esse respeito, leu o regime de signos de Inácio de Loyola, fundador da Sociedade de Jesus, conforme uma contenção do imaginário e uma proliferação da imaginação, de sorte que a lida com as imagens manifestaria certa indiferença por parte do jesuíta, transformando a carência de signo em signo. Sobre a linguagem dos *Exercícios Espirituais* de Loyola, Barthes compreende-a enquanto indecidibilidade, isto é, como um equilíbrio de paradigmas. «Essa igualdade de paradigma é a famosa indiferença inaciana, que tanto indignou os inimigos dos jesuítas: nada querer por si mesmo, ser tão disponível quanto um cadáver; *perinde ac cadaver*; um discípulo de Inácio, Jerônimo Nadal, quando lhe peguntaram o que decida, respondia que não se inclinava para nada, a não ser para não se inclinar para nada» (Barthes 2005, 78).

Jorge de Lima, na esteira da fórmula de Rimbaud (*Je est un autre*), manifesta certo imperativo de abandono do eu em busca de uma universalidade da palavra na infantilização dos indígenas, na puerilização dos católicos brasileiros e até em seus ensaios sobre poesia. Mas não convém pensar a infantilidade da escrita humilde ou a negação do eu como uma saída formalista, como no estabelecimento de um jogo pré-babélico: a oposição entre o eterno (divino) e o temporal (satânico) ou o infantil (novo) e o maduro (perverso). Pelo contrário, essas encruzilhadas não possuem solução, estabelecendo um impasse entre a postulação de uma versificação livre de blasfêmia ou de subjetividade em oposição à fatalidade de se utilizar de uma língua humana. Essa incoerência pode ser repensada a partir das reflexões de Agamben sobre as teses de Benveniste no sentido de que a linguagem tal qual a conhecemos postula uma infância, uma anterioridade a si mesma. Mas essa infância somente pode ser pensada linguisticamente, o que cria um impasse. Mais do que ser considerada um paraíso perdido, essa infância é considerada um o hiato inafastável entre o humano e o linguístico. É pela infância, por essa inconclusão entre o homem e sua língua, que a linguagem não consiste em um jogo de perfeito funcionamento e que a torna um substrato para o afluir das subjetividades. «A infância age, com efeito, primeiramente sobre a linguagem, constituindo-se e condicionando-a de modo especial» (Agamben 2005, 62). Sendo assim, ela pode estar relacionada à própria infância como potência de enunciação. E, portanto, uma linguagem infantilizada ou um *sermo humilis* possivelmente sejam justamente opostos a uma ausência de autoria, isto é, possivelmente sejam o espaço por excelência de manifestação subjetiva e da autobiografia.

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4 Da hagiografia à auto-hagiografia

As vidas de Anchieta, Santo Antônio e Dom Vital, por mais que se proponham a enunciar nos santos ou beatos uma exemplaridade de austeridade pela via de uma linguagem contida e de autoria pouco marcada, não chegam a cumprir fielmente esses pressupostos. Isso porque a riqueza imagética e sua posterior contenção estabelece textos com certa unidade, ainda que possuam um fundamento negativo. A implosão da tentativa de não marcar uma autoria pode, paradoxalmente, constituir a parte mais autoral e até mesmo pessoal de sua escrita, que poderia ser chamada de auto-hagiografia. Uma escrita obstinada por fazer a poeticidade de Deus.

Em um artigo publicado no jornal *A Manhã* em 12 de março de 1942, Jorge de Lima se posiciona diante do heroísmo egoico dos ditadores e mesmo de mártires que concentram o perigo e as relações da vida sobre suas próprias imagens. Opõe a esse narcicismo, um heroísmo autêntico, isto é, um «heroísmo que acha sua razão de ser na fraternidade humana, sem barreiras de raça nem de classe, no valor cristão antindividualista, por amor ao próximo, tendo como espectador a presença real do Eterno Juiz» (Lima 1942, 4). Diego Cervelin, na tese *Uma poética do despedaçamento: uma invenção de Jorge de Lima*, defendida na Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, estabelece uma chave de leitura que dispensa os rótulos de surrealismo ou catolicismo no autor para destacar como a linguagem limiana, especialmente no livro em *A Invenção de Orfeu*, encontra sua força enunciativa na cisão pós-baudelariana do eu, procedimento que aproximaria poetas e médicos, de cuja relação a biografia de Lima é exemplar. Para Cervelin, «os fundamentos e os efeitos da experiência de cisão do ‘eu’ e do ‘nós’ confluem em uma instância de esquecimento que, só-depois se reverte em não esquecimento poiético – ou em obra que se desdobra entre ‘100’ e ‘sem’ sentidos, ora tentando libertar-se dos despedaçamentos ora os aproveitando enquanto inoperatividades» (Cervelin 2016, 210-11). Se, as considerações de Cervelin (2016) forem retomadas em um sentido mais abrangente visando a leitura de alguns aspectos da obra esparsa de Lima, torna-se possível compreender a humildade das vidas de Francisco de Assis, de Antônio de Pádua e de Dom Vital de um modo dissonante em relação à poética e à temática das figurações desastrosas e ponderadas do autor. Elas podem ser compreendidas na ambiguidade entre a construção de sentidos e a nulidade de sentido e, assim, todo o esquema retórico do autor alagoano, em última instância, anunciaria sua própria implosão. Inevitavelmente, as descrições biográficas de humildade que se mantém até o fim dos textos chegam a um momento de glorificação, o qual não se traduz em uma gesta de herói ou em uma santificação do próprio escrever, mas na glorificação de uma vacuidade.

Essa vacuidade da linguagem de Jorge de Lima não se dá em uma negatividade dialética ou na postulação de um nada com pertinência

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ontológica, mas em um esvaziamento de referência na qual a vida nobre do santo é evocada para, logo em seguida, ser negada pelo voto de pobreza. Vale lembrar como as hagiografias normalmente exacerbam a genealogia do personagem narrado, na qual costuma haver uma inversão entre a posição social privilegiada herdada e o verdadeiro *ethos* recebido pela miséria. Assim, o santo humilde ganha ares de nobreza espiritual, ao passo que determinado nobre pode ser santificado. Essas genealogias e inversões de valores não se dão de maneira diferente nos textos de Jorge de Lima. Na *Vida extraordinária de Santo Antônio*, essa característica vem expressa logo ao início do texto, quando, após apresentar em pormenores como a linhagem de Antônio advinha da casa de Bulhões, ligada até mesmo à fundação do Reino Latino de Jerusalém, o autor renega seu lugar hierárquico:

Ora, meu amiguinho. Santo Antônio era nobre, como você já sabe, mas se ele houvesse agido, na qualidade de nobre, na qualidade de sua classe, ou da classe em cujo meio veio ao mundo, não teria sido santo. E, assim, a sua primeira resolução para atingir a perfeição e a santidade foi despir-se inteiramente de todos os preconceitos da classe a que pertencia e não considerar-se nem senhor, nem súdito, nem português, nem italiano, mas pessoa de Deus, universal, católica (Lima 1954, 52-3).

A prosa de Jorge de Lima retoma a hagiografia popular no sentido de criar fabulações nobiliárquicas para, em seguida, haver o abandono do próprio nome ou da própria história familiar. Em Dom Vital, o autor se remete à grande mestiçagem racial no Brasil, que poderia ser percebida, inclusive, na família do religioso: «É natural, pois, aparecerem tantos Albuquerques dentro e fora dos primórdios de nossa história – um Jorge de Albuquerque, celebrado em péssimos versos na Propopopeia, de Bento Teixeira, e tanto tempo depois um D. Antônia Albina de Albuquerque, mãe de D. Vital» (Lima 1945, 13-14). Ou seja, a história de Dom Vital acaba por se confundir com a história política e literária do Brasil. Mas seria pela diferenciação em termos de humildade e resignação que o beato haveria manifestado seu dom divino. Além do mais, em *Anchieta*, há uma interpenetração ainda maior entre a vida do santo e a vida do país. O livro praticamente estabelece uma contextualização dos primeiros anos da colonização do Brasil para, apenas à página 131, portanto, além da metade do texto, ser narrada sua história pessoal, tanto no que diz respeito à sua estirpe e infância nas ilhas Canárias quanto nos primeiros feitos de fidelidade e resignação quando entra para a ordem dos jesuítas. Como não poderia deixar de ser, esse gesto dignifica a resistência a penúrias do jovem Anchieta, em uma resignação que seria mantida quando o religioso acompanharia o próprio Governador Geral do Brasil em sua vinda. «A oito de maio de 1553, incorporado ao séquito do novo governador D. Duarte da Costa, armeiro-mór do reino, veio Anchieta com outros missionários, servindo a bordo em ajudar o cozinheiro da nau» (Lima 1934, 133). A

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manutenção desse caráter destemido e humilde, no decorrer do texto, não privilegia seu papel de fundador de São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro, as duas cidades mais importantes do Brasil, mas destaca a santificação por ser um ajudante de cozinha em um navio.

É absolutamente pertinente o questionamento sobre até que ponto a recusa de um poeta em figurar de maneira fabulosa ou em revelar-abandonar sua estirpe não se constitui também em uma forma de singularidade e, no limite, de uma autobiografia por trás da hagiografia. Mesmo o milagre é recorrentemente negado pelo santo, que se compara até o fim em dejeto, corpo morto ou inoperância, muito embora ele seja dito. O caso de Anchieta é muito exemplar a esse respeito: «Vendo a intimidade com que as aves tinha com ele, um dia um irmão assinalou o milagre. Então o apóstolo retorquiu que as aves também pairavam, sem nada haver de extraordinário, em cima dos monturos, dos espantalhos e das forcas» (Lima 1934, 193). Ou seja, dada a afeição dos animais pela figura beata de Anchieta, como em São Francisco, as aves pairam sobre si. E o protagonista, nesse mesmo momento, reitera a contenção, afirmando o fato dos pássaros pairarem também sobre lixo, sobre bonecos e sobre cadáveres. Em Dom Vital, de maneira muito próxima, é narrada, em tom de milagre, uma melhora súbita por parte do religioso convalescente, a qual o teria permitido realizar a missa de Páscoa: «Um halo de angelitude, de transfiguração extraterrena iluminava-lhe o semblante lívido. Apenas terminava o Santo Sacrifício, queixava-se: «estou muito cansado; não sirvo mais para nada, e já foi felicidade ter podido ainda hoje celebrar» (Lima 1945, 48). Novamente, não há propriamente uma redenção pelo milagre. Ao contrário, continua a contenção da prosopopeia, na medida em que o religioso afirma justamente não servir «para mais nada».

Se, conforme Paul de Man (1979), o tropo da capacidade de figurar em prosopopeias ou desfigurá-las é o que confere a textos de quaisquer gêneros uma voz estranha de fundo autobiográfico, possivelmente a tensão entre o milagre e a rejeição do milagre seja emanação de uma voz de um sujeito do texto pretensamente humilde de Jorge de Lima. A iteração do coloquialismo, do afrouxamento das tensões em momentos narrativos e da dubiedade das prosopopeias, enfim, da negação da poesia em suas prosas, pretendem alcançar uma beaticidade das palavras. Almeja a utopia de uma linguagem em seu grau zero, quando fosse despojada de qualquer autoria. Mesmo assim, em suas vidas, Jorge de Lima perfaz uma singularidade na sua própria indecidibilidade entre figurar e não figurar e, na medida em que busque na impessoalidade uma linguagem próxima à de Deus, tal gesto se desdobra em um paradoxo: por um lado, o cúmulo da humildade daquele que se esquece de qualquer acumulação de sentido tornando-se um profeta da Palavra; por outro lado, alcança o cúmulo do narcisismo – ou do gesto poético por excelência – ao buscar um novo nada para então assoprar o verbo. A glorificação acontece apenas quando o texto termina suas

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páginas e fica claro que não haverá evento portentoso ou sobrehumano. Apenas o *exemplo*, que faz da continuidade da rejeição seu maior trunfo, do mesmo modo em que suas narrativas não conseguem atingir um clímax suficiente que garanta uma saída triunfal na própria diegese: apenas uma constância da negação e do esvaziamento de um significado canônico criam a sacralidade. As vidas de Jorge de Lima, portanto, enveredam por figurações de genealogia, heroísmo e milagre para sempre desviarem a carga emotiva dessas mesmas figuras em uma escrita da humildade que oferece ao leitor nada a não ser uma constância da indecidibilidade. Ainda assim, as figurações e os tropos, que são abandonados enquanto letra morta nesse caminho de vivificação da linguagem por parte da estética da humildade, nada mais são do que singularidades abafadas (no limite, autobiográficas) que, obstinadamente, insistem em sobreviver.

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Tra lontananza e vicinanza: gli italiani e gli sloveni nel romanzo contemporaneo sloveno in Italia

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Abstract Border places are of particular interest when it comes to identifying the way in which groups of different nationalities perceive the neighbour, the Other. One of these areas is also Friuli Venezia Giulia, where other nationalities, among which also the Slovenes, have coexisted near their Italian majority for centuries. Since the end of the 19th century until today, the Slovenes of this region have frequently addressed their national minority position through literature. Through it they formed a specific image of themselves and of the neighbouring populations in every period. Taking into consideration some contemporary Slovenian novels written in Italy in the last twenty-six years, the paper aims to investigate their representation of the Other seen as different and external to the community. The questions therefore are: do Slovenes living in Italy perceive as the Other mostly Italians or the members of other nationalities? What are the main reasons for the identification of a subject as different from them? What sort of hierarchy is being established between the various national identities within the examined literary texts? With the help of the imagological method, this article will offer some tentative answers to the questions raised, by considering also the socio-political context.

Keywords Slovenian literature in Italy. Novel. Identity. Borders. Otherness.

1 Un luogo di confine

I luoghi di confine, più di altri

> rappresenta[no] la coabitazione di diversità, l'incontro stimolante di continui contrasti culturali ed il confronto di tradizioni incompatibili. […] Visto che si tratta di aree di continuo scambio, sui territori di confine la semiosfera è in permanente creazione. (Škulj 2005, 353)[1]

1 Tutti i testi e i titoli dei romanzi che non sono ancora tradotti in italiano sono stati trasposti in italiano dall'Autore del contributo.

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In un tale contesto, la percezione dell'Altro[2] nella categoria dell'identità nazionale, quindi inteso come straniero, è sottoposto a una costante (ri) esaminazione, avvertibile anche nella produzione letteraria locale. Uno dei suddetti territori è il Friuli Venezia Giulia, dove, a fianco della maggioranza italiana, da secoli convivono altre comunità nazionali, tra le quali quella slovena. Dalla fine dell'Ottocento fino ad oggi gli sloveni di questa regione hanno spesso trattato nella letteratura la propria posizione di minoranza nazionale, formando così in ogni epoca una specifica immagine letteraria di se stessi e dei popoli vicini; contemporaneamente, però, anche loro venivano rappresentati nella letteratura maggioritaria (cf. Cergol 2015; Pirjevec 2005; Pizzi 2007, 114-20).

Com'è stato esposto già da Daniel-Henri Pageaux nella sua spiegazione del metodo imagologico, le immagini letterarie sono intermediari culturali e simbolici che «nascono quando, se anche fugacemente, prendiamo coscienza di un io in relazione all'altro, di un qui in rapporto a un altrove» (Pageaux 2008, 20) e le più interessanti sono proprio quelle che riguardano l'Altro più prossimo. La letteratura, infatti, «riproduce le relazioni sociali e politico-storiche tra diverse società, come anche le ideologie che le hanno generate» (Matajc 2016, 940) e «[i]l romanzo viene considerato ormai una fonte di conoscenza fondamentale per capire i legami sociali e la vita delle persone» (Santerini 2008, 11). Tra i mass media (e tra essi c'è anche la letteratura) e la comunicazione quotidiana intercorre uno scambio continuo visto che la comunicazione quotidiana è spesso un'interpretazione di informazioni mediate dai mass media e contemporaneamente i mass media spesso riproducono e ricostruiscono le posizioni e i pareri di vari gruppi sociali (Šabec 2007, 104).

Con l'aiuto dell'imagologia il contributo vuole identificare colui che è percepito come l'Altro[3] – inteso come diverso, esterno alla collettività dal punto di vista dell'identità nazionale – nei romanzi contemporanei sloveni, scritti in Italia negli ultimi ventisei anni. La metodologia si basa principalmente sull'analisi dei seguenti elementi: la prospettiva nazionale (la prospettiva dello sloveno in Italia, dello sloveno in Slovenia, dell'italiano ovvero dell'appartenente ad altre nazionalità), i rapporti tra i personaggi letterari appartenenti a diverse nazionalità (diretti o indiretti, sereni o

2 Quando si parla dell'Altro «si tratta sempre di relazioni all'interno di una comunità. A ciò che si trova al di fuori della comunità, si addice di più il termine 'altro' o 'straniero', nei confronti del quale si forma l'identità (la riconoscibilità, la specificità) della comunità, e viene percepito da essa a causa della sua grandezza e forza come pericoloso. Quando si tratta d'identità nazionali, sono considerate tali le altre nazioni» (Hladnik 2016, 48).

3 Il definire il singolo o un gruppo come 'l'Altro' si svolge parallelamente alla stereotipizzazione, quindi con l'etichettare un singolo o un gruppo in modo riduzionistico ed escludendolo/li in modo simbolico con l'intento di creare confini e avere il controllo delle differenze (Šabec 2007, 108).

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problematici) e le ragioni che li determinano. Individuando i concetti cardinali e tracciando la gerarchia che s’instaura tra le varie identità nazionali all’interno dei testi letterari presi in considerazione, il contributo trae una ‘mappa’ d’immagini mentali, che è difficile cogliere pienamente tramite gli altri media. In conformità con gli approcci moderni l’analisi s’intreccia con la presentazione del contesto sociopolitico della minoranza slovena in Italia degli ultimi decenni.

2 Chi era l’Altro? O Breve panoramica sulla storia del romanzo sloveno in Italia

I primi testi sloveni, al tempo prevalentemente religiosi, nella regione oggi denominata Friuli Venezia Giulia, risalgono al Seicento, ma il romanzo sloveno in questo territorio nasce alla fine dell’Ottocento, quando con la crescita dello standard economico degli sloveni nella provincia di Trieste e Gorizia migliora il livello della loro istruzione e si sviluppa la coscienza di una propria identità nazionale. Sempre più spesso viene prediletto l’uso della lingua slovena sia nel privato sia in ambito pubblico, a scuola, a messa e nelle pubblicazioni stampate, favorendo in questo modo l’editoria giornalistica e letteraria in lingua slovena. Così, dopo trentadue anni dalla pubblicazione del primo romanzo sloveno *Deseti brat* (Il decimo fratello, 1866) di Josip Jurčič (1844-81), esce il primo romanzo in lingua slovena *Fata morgana* (1898) – pubblicato originariamente a puntate – scritto da Marica Nadlišek Bartol (1867-1940). Nello stesso periodo anche la letteratura slovena nella provincia di Udine, passata al Regno d’Italia nel 1866 con un plebiscito pilotato (Banchig 2016), fa un considerevole balzo in avanti soprattutto grazie al poeta Ivan Trinko Zamejski (1863-1954) che passa dalla letteratura prevalentemente dialettale e popolare a quella d’autore, scritta in lingua letteraria, rafforzando così l’identità nazionale slovena nella Slavia veneta.

Scontrandosi con un’atmosfera permeata dall’irredentismo italiano, il romanzo sloveno in Italia, agli albori del Novecento e ai propri inizi, predilige temi legati all’identità nazionale, mentre

> le tematiche ideologiche, politiche e sociali sembrano perdere di urgenza rispetto al problema nazionale. (Ara, Magris 2007, 53)

In quel periodo la letteratura è riconosciuta e usata come mezzo di creazione e affermazione della nazionalità, in cui

> gli sloveni inizialmente non nutrono stereotipi molto negativi nei confronti dei propri vicini: si tratta […] per lo più di frecciatine satiriche. (Cergol 2015, 238)

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Di grande importanza per la letteratura slovena in Italia e per la sua identificazione come tale è l'anno 1918, quando la Venezia Giulia diventa parte costitutiva dell'Italia, e l'anno 1920, quando il trattato di Rapallo conferma ufficialmente il confine tra la Slovenia (allora facente parte del Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni) e l'Italia. Un terzo degli sloveni da un giorno all'altro si trova separato dal resto dei propri connazionali, ma ciò che rende la loro situazione estremamente disagiata è l'avvento del fascismo. Le parole di Benito Mussolini espresse a Pola già nel settembre del 1920 annunciano chiaramente l'atteggiamento verso gli sloveni e gli slavi in generale:

> Di fronte a una razza inferiore e barbara come la slava non si deve seguire la politica che dà lo zuccherino, ma quella del bastone. Io credo che si possano sacrificare 500.000 slavi barbari a 50.000 italiani. (Miletto 2007, 13)

Il nazionalismo italiano di confine si basa sull'idea che

> tutto ciò che è raccolto intorno al fascismo è presentato come autentica italianità, […] ciò che è estraneo al mondo dei valori del fascismo è bollato come antipatriottismo e sovversivismo. (Ara, Magris 2007, 121)

Per questa ragione il fascismo cerca di imporre la monoculturalità ed eliminare tutto ciò che è diverso. Gli sloveni e le altre minoranze nazionali sono presi di mira. L'editoria slovena è costretta a una drastica riduzione, si trova sotto controllo, è sottoposta alla censura ed è limitata dalla legge «a contenuti religiosi, tecnici, musicali, privi di temi politici o nazionali» (Kacin Wohinz, Pirjevec 2000, 60). Nonostante i restringimenti, la letteratura slovena in Italia proprio in quell'epoca è uno dei principali strumenti adoperati per combattere il fascismo prima e il nazismo poi, e per affermare il proprio diritto di esistere come nazione con una propria cultura, lingua e storia.

In quest'epoca, in cui il fascismo lega strettamente a sé il concetto d'italianità e per più di vent'anni svolge una politica repressiva nei confronti degli sloveni, la letteratura slovena lascia la propria impronta permanente e profonda nel romanzo sloveno in Italia. Dagli anni '30 in poi e ancora di più nel dopoguerra, quando il romanzo della minoranza slovena finalmente può fiorire appieno, soprattutto con Boris Pahor (1913) e Alojz Rebula (1924), è inevitabile che questo sia spesso volto a metabolizzare il periodo storico buio appena terminato. Di conseguenza l'Altro rappresentato in esso è il più delle volte la figura dell'italiano-fascista e del tedesco-nazista, chiaramente destinato al ruolo di avversario e nemico.

La tendenza però cambia negli anni '90, segnati da una serie di mutamenti sociopolitici, importanti per i rapporti tra la Slovenia e l'Italia,

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quindi anche per la minoranza nazionale slovena in Italia (per esempio l'indipendenza della Slovenia dalla Jugoslavia nel 1991, l'approvazione della legge 38/01 a tutela della minoranza linguistica slovena della regione Friuli Venezia Giulia nel 2001, l'entrata della Slovenia nell'Unione Europea nel 2004 e nell'Area Schengen nel 2007). Le ripercussioni di tali mutamenti sono percettibili anche nella letteratura dell'area vicina al confine italo-sloveno, nel suo rapporto verso l'Altro e nelle sue rappresentazioni.

Nella provincia di Udine la letteratura conserva a lungo un carattere folkloristico a causa dell'arretratezza economica e culturale. La letteratura di quell'area rimane fino ad oggi legata soprattutto alla poesia e alla drammaturgia. Pochi sono gli autori che scrivono in prosa e ancora più rari sono coloro che si dedicano al romanzo. Riguardo a ciò è abbastanza eloquente il dato che tra il 1991 e il 2016 non è stato pubblicato alcun romanzo scritto in sloveno standard da un autore sloveno dalla provincia di Udine. Sempre più spesso, infatti, gli autori scelgono di scrivere nello sloveno dialettale o nell'italiano standard.

3 Chi è l'Altro oggi?

Negli ultimi ventisei anni, tra il 1991 e il 2016, sono quindici gli autori sloveni in Italia che in totale hanno pubblicato quarantotto romanzi. In base alla loro rappresentazione romanzata dell'Altro, che in gran parte coincide con la loro appartenenza generazionale, gli autori possono essere suddivisi in tre gruppi:

1. generazione 1910-45: Boris Pahor (1913), Alojz Rebula (1924), Bojan Pavletič (1928-2010), Evelina Umek (1939), Irena Žerjal (1940), Marij Čuk (1952);[4]
2. generazione 1946-65: Sergej Verč (1948-2015), Dušan Jelinčič (1953), Jasna Jurečič (1955-2014), Marko Sosič (1958), Igor Škamperle (1962);
3. generazione 1966-90: Vilma Purič (1966), Matjaž Klemše (1978), Vinko Bandelj (1987) e Erik Sancin (1981).

Guardiamo più precisamente quali sono le caratteristiche di ciascuna delle tre categorie.

4 Marij Čuk rappresenta generazionalmente un'eccezione in questo gruppo, ma la rappresentazione dell'Altro nei suoi due romanzi, *Pena majskega vala* (La schiuma dell'onda di maggio) e *Molk koloradskih hroščev* (Il silenzio delle dorifore), coincide completamente con quelle della generazione 1910-45.

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3.1 Niente di nuovo sul fronte italo-sloveno (generazione 1910-45)

La generazione 1910-45[5] è la più fertile, la più tradotta in lingua italiana e in altre lingue straniere.[6] La prima generazione, comprendente autori che hanno vissuto in prima persona il periodo fascista, nazista e la seconda guerra mondiale, rappresenta la continuità della tradizione postbellica nella raffigurazione dell'Altro.

Attraverso i propri protagonisti letterari, gli scrittori assumono la prospettiva nazionale a loro più congenita, cioè quella degli sloveni in Italia. I cosiddetti Altri messi più in evidenza sono gli italiani. Nonostante la relazione dei personaggi sloveni con essi sia perlopiù indiretta, ha nello stesso tempo un carattere notevolmente conflittuale e difficile. I personaggi letterari sloveni, che vivono in Italia, conoscono (e adoperano) molto bene la lingua e si muovono agevolmente nella cultura italiana, tuttavia rarissime volte cercano un contatto diretto con i suoi appartenenti.

Il rapporto più complesso e ostile, conseguenza della diffidenza reciproca, è quello che hanno con gli italiani di Trieste. Ciò che incuriosisce particolarmente gli scrittori sloveni è l'indagine delle cause del conflitto italo-sloveno che individuano in quattro motivazioni principali.

La prima è l'origine storica del conflitto risalente alla nascita delle identità nazionali nell'Ottocento, quando come registra Boris Pahor (2007, 71) nel romanzo *Zibelka sveta* (Il petalo giallo) per la prima volta «scoppiavano gli scontri fra i figli della borghesia italiana e gli sloveni». Infatti, in quel periodo sia gli sloveni sia gli italiani nella provincia di Trieste e Gorizia cercano di affermare la propria individualità nazionale tracciandone anche il territorio, ma proprio su questo punto le opinioni collidono in modo feroce, poiché le ambizioni territoriali proposte nei programmi politici spesso si sovrappongono.

La seconda motivazione dei rapporti burrascosi anche alla fine del Novecento e agli inizi del ventunesimo secolo è quella che i romanzieri sloveni citano più spesso, cioè il fascismo latente,[7] che a loro avviso a Trieste non si è mai sradicato del tutto rigenerandosi di generazione in generazione. Come scrive Evelina Umek (2006, 146) nel romanzo *Hiša na Krasu* (La casa

5 Nell'ambito della generazione 1910-45 rientrano ventiquattro romanzi, scritti tra il 1991 e il 2016. Nel contributo sono citati solo alcuni. Per saperne di più cf. Smotlak 2017.

6 Per il primato di questa generazione ha sicuramente grande merito Boris Pahor. Già apprezzato in Francia, ma a lungo sottovalutato in Slovenia e semisconosciuto in Italia, dopo l'intervista nel programma televisivo *Che tempo che fa* sulla rete televisiva Rai 3 nel 2008, ha finalmente riscosso una maggiore attenzione. Dopo il 2008 molti dei suoi testi letterari, saggi, interviste e articoli sono stati pubblicati in varie lingue e Stati europei rendendolo uno degli scrittori sloveni attualmente più noti e apprezzati nel contesto internazionale.

7 Il fascismo è il periodo storico più spesso rappresentato nei romanzi sloveni della generazione 1910-45. Comparandolo con la letteratura triestina scritta da autori italiani, è possibile trarne delle similitudini nel tono e nella sacralizzazione con la quale gli italiani descrivono il dominio jugoslavo a Trieste tra il 1 maggio e il 12 giugno 1945 e l'esilio degli

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sul Carso), ambientato nei primi anni 2000, c’è «sempre lo stesso odio, la diffidenza tra sloveni e italiani». La mentalità fascista, infatti, secondo loro riaffiora nella contemporaneità per esempio attraverso «le osservazioni ostili dei cittadini anziani» (Žerjal 2006, 61) sull’uso della lingua slovena in pubblico, le comparazioni degli sloveni con «‘scarafaggi […] sanguisughe’» (Čuk 1998, 70) oppure con le scritte offensive sui «monumenti ai caduti, imbrattati» (Pahor 2003, 292). Bojan Pavletič nel romanzo *Zvoki barv* (Il suono dei colori) tramite il dialogo tra il protagonista, appartenente alla minoranza slovena, e Anna Rasseni, una giovane italiana attiva in un’organizzazione triestina di estrema destra e antislovena, con evidenti origini slovene che però nega fervidamente,[8] cerca di ritrarre lo sguardo neofascista e intollerante verso gli sloveni nel modo più autentico possibile, usando così la finzione letteraria per analizzarlo e ribattendogli attraverso di essa.

> «[A]ppartieni a una nazione piccola, limitata, politicamente non ancora evoluta. Tale da non avere ancora un’estensione e dimensione storica. Tale che forse proprio perciò non ha diritto a un’esistenza autonoma.»
> «Come tali quindi dobbiamo scomparire?»
> «Ai flussi e alle leggi storiche non si può comandare. Queste sono le regole storico-fisiche: la massa maggiore sovrasta quella minore.» (Pavletič 2010, 57)

La terza causa della distanza tra sloveni e italiani a Trieste è percepita dagli autori sloveni nel disinteresse e nella ritrosia degli italiani triestini verso l’esplorazione della lingua, della cultura e della storia slovena, che spesso finiscono per essere soppresse. Come scrive Alojz Rebula (2005a, 180) nel romanzo *Kačja roža* (La peonia del Carso): «‘*È piu facile che a parlare sloveno sia uno stornello che un triestino*’». Ciò è avvertito come un atteggiamento umiliante che provoca fastidio e accresce la tendenza a chiudersi nella comunità d’origine in cui ci si sente uguali agli altri, compresi e apprezzati. Evelina Umek, ad esempio, nel romanzo *Zlata poroka ali Tržaški blues* (Nozze d’oro o Il blues triestino) presenta una situazione del tutto verosimile in cui, sebbene i personaggi letterari sloveni e italiani di Trieste siano amici di vecchia data, per l’italiana Elvira la cultura dell’amica slovena Jolanda (e della conoscente Zinka), com’è evidente dal dialogo che segue, rimane estranea e lontana.

italiani dall’Istria, da Fiume e dalla Dalmazia. Le due comunità e la loro memoria collettiva si rivelano così l’una per l’altra ‘il rovescio della stessa medaglia’.

8 Gli autori sloveni spesso rappresentano la triestinità come una categoria d’identificazione, adoperata come unica ed esclusiva da coloro che cercano di nascondere e negare dietro a essa le proprie origini non italiane. Secondo loro la triestinità è un’identità che è necessariamente legata a una o più nazionalità, che possono essere l’identità italiana, slovena, croata, ebrea, ceca, ecc.

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> Elvira […] più che domandare constatava: «*Lei la conossi Jolanda zà da tanto tempo?*»[9]
> «*Da una vita,*» rispose Zinka.
> «*Cossa i xè de fora?*» «*Perché?*» «*La messa, el prete parlava in slavo.*» «*E anche in italian,*» obiettò Zinka. Doveva controllarsi per non rispondere scortesemente alla signora accanto a sé, che forse era lei quella che veniva «*de fora*», lei e Jolanda invece erano cresciute proprio qui. Desiderava spiegarle, che la messa non si era svolta in una certa lingua slava, ma nello sloveno, e che è molto ignorante se non lo sa.
> Alcuni secondi le servirono per calmarsi, poi rispose il più gentilmente possibile: «*No, no, semo nate qua.*»
> Nella signora Elvira questa risposta sicuramente aprì una serie di domande e dubbi, ma vedendo come Zinka puntava lo sguardo lontano da essa attraverso la finestra della macchina, capì, che era meglio tacere. (Umek 2010, 111)

La possibilità di un’amicizia profonda tra sloveni e italiani si manifesta in rare occasioni e solo se l’italiano non è triestino. In questi casi l’interesse reciproco degli uni verso la cultura e la lingua degli altri sono la condizione necessaria per l’instaurazione della fiducia tra i personaggi, come conferma anche l’esempio di amicizia tra l’italiano toscano Amos e lo sloveno Stanko (alter ego del poeta sloveno Srečko Kosovel (1904-26) nel romanzo *Kačja roža* di Alojz Rebula. Lo sbocciare dell’amore italo-sloveno, invece, in nessun caso ha futuro. Ogni tentativo in questa direzione, come ad esempio nel romanzo di Bojan Pavletič tra il protagonista sloveno e l’italiana Anna, o nei due romanzi di Marij Čuk tra lo sloveno Maks e l’italiana Luisa nel romanzo *Pena majskega vala* e tra lo sloveno Nace e la sua moglie italiana nel romanzo *Molk koloradskih hroščev* s’interrompe rivelandosi infelice o perlopiù impossibile proprio per ragioni nazionali. Meno utopistico è l’amore tra gli sloveni e gli appartenenti a nazionalità non italiane, per esempio francesi, inglesi, spagnoli e altri, il che evidenzia ancora di più la certezza implicita degli autori più anziani che il rapporto italo-sloveno a Trieste sia ancora irrisolto.

Il quarto elemento che è causa d’incomprensioni nei rapporti tra sloveni e italiani di Trieste è una discordante interpretazione del passato, soprattutto della prima metà del Novecento. I personaggi sloveni anche in questo caso si sentono incompresi. Gli scrittori inscenano dialoghi di confronto tra le due parti chiamate in causa, tra due diverse memorie collettive, ma l’esito è sempre lo stesso: non c’è alcuna sintesi o compromesso. Ognuno rimane sul proprio argine della storia, come si evince anche dal seguente passaggio.

9 I passaggi in dialetto triestino sono scritti in tale forma già nel testo originale.

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> Quando una volta cercò di farle avvicinare il mondo dei suoi concittadini sloveni, dei quali non sapeva nulla o almeno pochissimo e pure quel po' era distorto, è venuto a galla che durante la guerra suo nonno era stato ucciso dagli slavi. In modo barbaro e primitivo. Maleducatamente. È stato buttato vivo nella foiba. Cercò di spiegarle le ragioni di questi atti e presentarle anche l'altro verso della medaglia. E allora litigarono. […] Il discorso su questo tra loro cessò per sempre. (Pavletič 2010, 21)

Nel contesto della percezione della Seconda guerra mondiale i rapporti tra sloveni e italiani di Trieste, già intricati di per sé, si complicano ulteriormente nei confronti degli esuli e dei loro discendenti, che dopo la seconda guerra mondiale hanno lasciato l'Istria, Fiume e la Dalmazia per Trieste. Tra questi non c'erano solo italiani, ma anche alcuni di nazionalità slovena e croata che spostandosi in Italia hanno sostituito la propria identità d'origine con quella italiana. Nei romanzi questi ultimi sono spesso personaggi che affermano la propria italianità con l'aiuto del nazionalismo e dell'odio verso gli sloveni, come Fiore, figlio di un esule istriano, che arrivato in Italia aveva rinnegato la propria identità croata. Fiore costruisce e alimenta il proprio odio verso gli sloveni con la continua rievocazione dell'allontanamento forzato dall'Istria di suo padre, e delle foibe. Di conseguenza gli sloveni per lui sono tutti «'*infoibatori*'» (Umek 2010, 131).[10]

Gli scrittori sloveni in Italia, appartenenti alla generazione 1910-45, come abbiamo visto, spesso esaminano «la verità sulla coesistenza mancata» (Pahor 2003, 232) tra sloveni e italiani, riconoscono le colpe da entrambe le parti, ma non trovano alcuna soluzione favorevole all'avvicinamento. Entrambe le comunità nazionali nelle rappresentazioni letterarie rimangono «ognuna dietro i propri parapetti» (Pavletič 2010, 14), nonostante gli autori stessi al di fuori della scrittura abbiano spesso cercato di stabilire l'interazione fra il mondo sloveno e quello italiano, ad esempio Boris Pahor e Alojz Rebula come soci cofondatori del Gruppo/Skupina 85, nato con l'obbiettivo di «favorire una naturale, disinvolta e cordiale convivenza tra

10 Le foibe sono un tema trattato spesso nella cultura letteraria triestina italiana, «[m]etafore di ansietà confinaria, cronotopi bakhtiniani in cui spazio e tempo si corto-circuitano, […] si sono fatte carico nel corso dell'ultimo mezzo secolo delle memorie collettive, incertezze e desideri dei confini nordorientali, diventando uno dei *topoi* letterari» (Pizzi 2007, 167-8). Infatti, esse vengono rappresentate anche nella letteratura triestina slovena, come per esempio nei romanzi *Zgodba o reki, kripti in dvorljivem golobu* (La storia del fiume, della cripta e del colombo corteggiatore) di Boris Pahor, *Cesta s cipreso in zvezdo* (La strada con il cipresso e la stella) di Alojz Rebula, *Zvoki barv* di Bojan Pavletič, *Zlata poroka ali Tržaški blues* di Evelina Umek, *Tito, amor mijo* di Marko Sosič, ecc. Alcuni tra loro scrivendo delle foibe hanno cercato di raccontarle confrontando due posizioni diametralmente opposte – le liquidazioni viste come atto barbarico e parallelamente come conseguenza delle ingiustizie e atrocità subite dagli sloveni nel ventennio fascista, così Alojz Rebula: «'Buttare le persone nei baratri è barbarico' […] 'Distruggere per vent'anni il corpo e l'anima di una comunità nazionale – invece è civiltà […]?'» (Rebula 1998, 130).

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le due maggiori realtà culturali di Trieste» (Kravos 2017). Inoltre, Pahor è stato per più di venti anni professore d'italiano nelle scuole superiori con lingua d'insegnamento slovena a Trieste, Rebula, invece, ha discusso una tesi di dottorato a Roma incentrata sulle traduzioni slovene della *Divina Commedia* di Dante.

Per avere un quadro completo, però, bisogna aggiungere che la generazione menzionata non considera come Altri solo gli italiani, ma anche i connazionali sloveni che vivono in Slovenia, soprattutto nella capitale, a Lubiana; anzi il rapporto verso di essi è sorprendentemente simile a quello che hanno con gli italiani triestini. I personaggi letterari appartenenti alla minoranza nazionale slovena si sentono distanti da loro, li guardano con uno scetticismo legato a una strana combinazione di senso di superiorità e inferiorità, percettibile già nell'atteggiamento verso gli italiani triestini. Il reclamo che esprimono frequentemente alla patria è legato al suo disinteresse verso la loro specifica situazione di minoranza nazionale. Infatti, alcuni personaggi sloveni dalla Slovenia, creati dai romanzieri sloveni in Italia, guardano alla propria minoranza in modo spaventosamente simile a quello (neo)fascista, e valutano la sua posizione con simili parole: «'Capisco che […] cercino di resistere con tutte le forze all'assimilazione con la maggioranza nazionale, ma cosa puoi fare contro la dinamica della storia'» (Rebula 2005b, 108). Anche questo rapporto è segnato da dialoghi prettamente fittizi in cui ognuno rimane chiuso nel proprio microcosmo senza ascoltare, sentire e accettare veramente l'altro e le sue ragioni.

E allora c'è qualcuno al di fuori della propria comunità con cui i personaggi della minoranza slovena sentono un forte legame? Gli Altri con i quali si sentono uguali e da loro compresi sono coloro che condividono un destino simile, cioè gli appartenenti ad altre minoranze nazionali. Sono riconoscibili molti parallelismi tra le rappresentazioni degli autori sloveni di Trieste e quelli delle isole. Questi scrivono spesso del proprio senso d'isolamento ed emarginazione (Sacco Massineo 2009). In entrambi i casi si tratta di un attaccamento doloroso (perché non favorisce l'apertura verso l'Altro) e al contempo inalienabile (perché soddisfa il bisogno di accettazione) a una micro comunità/identità che serve a compensare la mancata inclusione nella macro comunità/identità, ad esempio nazionale, regionale, cittadina, ecc. Anche gli autori triestini di nazionalità italiana spesso scrivono di Trieste come di un luogo dimenticato e della triestinità come di un'identità mai completamente inserita nell'italianità, gli scrittori sloveni quindi si confrontano con un doppio senso di emarginazione identitaria al quale si aggiunge una terza esclusione e cioè la separazione fisica dallo stato sloveno, a lungo segnata dal confine (graf. 1).

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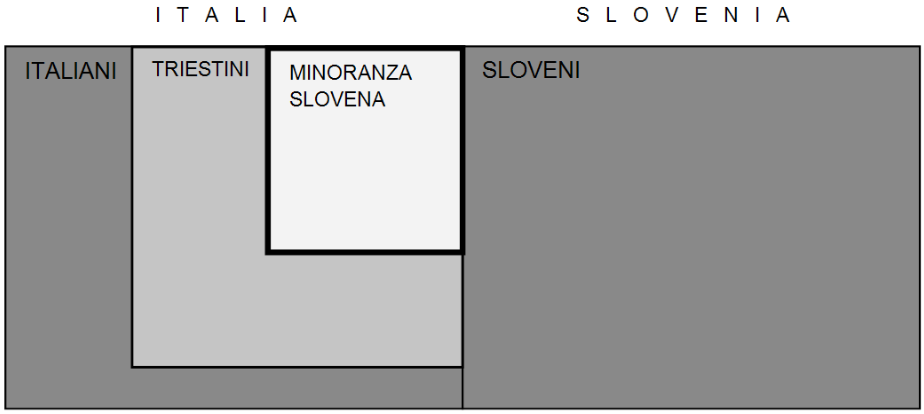


Grafico 1. La tripla esclusione identitaria degli sloveni in Italia

3.2 Alla ricerca del dialogo perduto (generazione 1946-65)

Un leggero cambiamento nei confronti dell'Altro è percettibile nei romanzi della generazione 1946-65,[11] anche se il punto d'osservazione prediletto – quello della minoranza slovena in Italia – rimane inalterato. L'interesse che prima era rivolto in gran parte al periodo della seconda guerra mondiale, con l'abbassarsi dell'età degli scrittori si sposta nel periodo del dopoguerra, dagli anni '60 in poi, di conseguenza anche l'atteggiamento verso gli Altri subisce delle modifiche. Le diversità nazionali hanno una rilevanza minore di quella nei romanzi degli scrittori più anziani. Sempre più rilevanti sono invece le differenze d'idee, carattere, interessi e posizione sociale, che legano o distanziano i singoli individui.

Il dialogo e l'amicizia tra sloveni e italiani rimangono ancora più un'eccezione che una regola, ma si rivelano possibili e sono rappresentati come più diretti, rilassati e amichevoli, soprattutto con gli italiani del sud. Uno degli esempi è l'amicizia che unisce il protagonista dei romanzi polizieschi di Sergej Verč, lo sloveno Beno-Benjamin Perko, commissario della polizia di Stato, e il suo collaboratore più stretto, l'ispettore Ayala, di origini siciliane. Quest'ultimo è presentato come simpatico, vivace, ottimista, tradizionalista, edonista, loquace, aperto verso gli altri e con il senso dell'estetica. Ciò che lo lega all'amico sloveno è soprattutto il

11 Nell'ambito della generazione 1946-65 rientrano venti romanzi, scritti tra il 1991 e il 2016. I romanzi più tradotti e premiati in questo gruppo sono quelli di Dušan Jelinčič e Marko Sosič. I testi del primo sono stati tradotti soprattutto in italiano, mentre i romanzi di Sosič anche in croato, francese, inglese, serbo e tedesco.

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forte senso di giustizia, condiviso in ugual misura da entrambi e quindi il loro rapporto non è più condizionato dall’interesse del personaggio italiano verso la cultura e la lingua slovena, come era tipico per gli autori della generazione precedente. I romanzieri della generazione di mezzo considerano ammissibili anche relazioni d’amore e matrimoni tra sloveni e italiani, però registrano questi casi come delle scelte controcorrente che non hanno ancora l’approvazione della comunità minoritaria. Tale è il caso della protagonista femminile slovena nel romanzo di Jasna Jurečič *Prerokuj mi še enkrat* (Predicimi ancora una volta) che sposa un uomo del sud Italia. Il loro matrimonio è felice nonostante la comunità d’origine della protagonista – la minoranza slovena in Italia – non ne sia entusiasta e guardi l’italiano con diffidenza.

> È italiano, estraneo, bisbigliavano le finestre con le tende bianche, ricamate da mani ruvide. Ho sentito che è una specie di conte, pieno di soldi, in città ha un appartamento, ma è venuto qua su, perché gli piaceva il profumo della rosa carsica, sì, è venuto su per questo, per strapparla – di nascosto, ma io ti dico, che non durerà a lungo, è venuto solo a divertirsi un po’, a perdere un po’ di tempo. (Jurečič 2008, 27)

Il rapporto che rimane in parte ancora insoluto, ma gli scrittori si addentrano a risolverlo, è quello tra la minoranza slovena e i triestini italiani. Delle quattro ragioni dell’ostilità reciproca, presentate nel capitolo precedente, se ne conservano due. La prima è ancora il fatto che gli sloveni a Trieste parlano anche l’italiano, mentre gli italiani non sanno la lingua slovena, il secondo invece riguarda la presenza persistente dell’ideologia (neo)fascista tra alcuni individui triestini italiani. Malgrado ciò gli autori, come ad esempio Sergej Verč, ammettono che persino a Trieste «i sentimenti negativi tra le due nazioni che ci vivono [sono] sempre più miti» (2003, 125) e che anche in questa città di frontiera «le cose negli ultimi anni [sono] cambiate abbastanza » (2009, 107). L’inimicizia tra i due fronti nazionali si limita così ai personaggi letterari più vecchi, mentre i giovani, che sono sempre più spesso anche i protagonisti dei romanzi, tentano nuovi atteggiamenti verso l’Altro. Marko Sosič, ad esempio, assegna questo ruolo al protagonista del romanzo *Tito, amor mijo*, un bambino sloveno di dieci anni che cercando il contatto diretto con un esule istriano di nazionalità italiana, il ragazzino Nicola, si trova in conflitto con la visione dello zio Albert:

> [È] pericoloso, dice lo zio Albert. Perché ci vivono i traditori. I fascisti che sono fuggiti dalla Jugoslavia […]. Ti guardano negli occhi, dice lo zio Albert, e se riescono a catturarti, in quello sguardo ti ci puoi perdere e non saper più tornare indietro. (Sosič 2012, 38)

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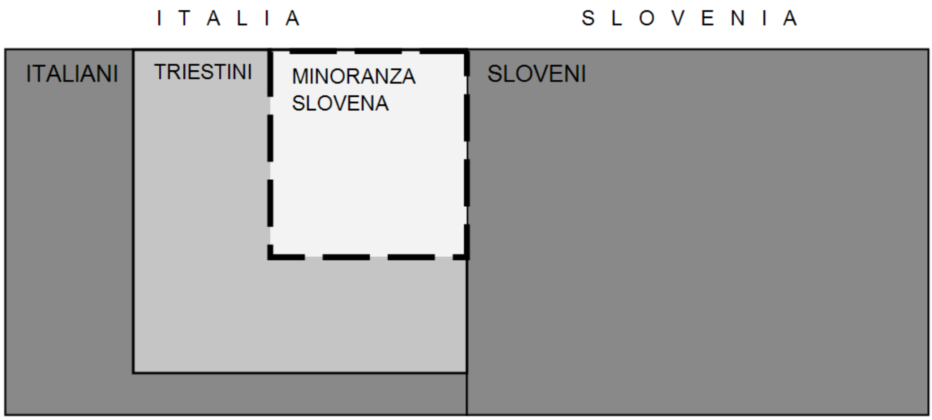


Grafico 2. La graduale apertura degli sloveni in Italia verso gli Altri storicamente problematici

Il bambino invece crede che sia possibile, che una persona «non [sia] fascista anche se è italian[a]» (Sosič 2012, 41) e che un italiano possa diventare suo amico.

Una dinamica simile volta verso una graduale distensione comprende anche la relazione con gli sloveni in Slovenia. Da una parte alcuni personaggi rilevano ancora dei pregiudizi e la lontananza reciproca con la Slovenia centrale, dall’altra s’innalzano sempre più forti le voci di quegli scrittori che vedono questo rapporto rasserenarsi. Il protagonista del romanzo *Sneg na zlati veji* (Neve sul ramo dorato) di Igor Škamperle per esempio li considera gentili e dice di loro:

> Lo sapevo che lassù, tra gli sloveni, dietro a un’apparente ruvidezza e una grezza espressione si nasconde un’anima gentile e grande, forse ancora più gentile di quella che c’è dietro le facce sorridenti dell’Adriatico. (Škamperle 1992, 32)

Si constata quindi un nuovo modo di percepire l’identità degli appartenenti alla minoranza slovena, cioè una minore percezione dell’Altro come minaccia rispetto al passato. La comunità minoritaria può quindi aprire degli spiragli verso Altri storicamente più problematici – gli italiani e gli sloveni di Slovenia (graf. 2). Ciò può essere ricondotto a una maggiore fiducia degli autori verso il prossimo dettata anche dal fatto di non aver subito e vissuto, né da parte degli uni né degli altri, situazioni socio-politiche che giustificherebbero la totale diffidenza e cautela. La parzialità dell’apertura verso l’Altro, invece, discende dalla presenza e importanza che ogni autore attribuisce alla memoria collettiva della generazione precedente. Meno

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l’autore si sente vincolato alla memoria dei predecessori, più è pronto a fare un passo verso l’Altro.

Il tentativo di uscire dal cerchio stretto dei rapporti italo-sloveni, che la prima generazione non manifestava, si delinea nella maggiore attenzione rivolta agli appartenenti di altre nazionalità. C’è un alto livello di empatia verso gli immigrati, visti come individui che a stento parlano l’italiano, vivono in condizioni di povertà, svolgono lavori mal pagati, sono impotenti, spaventati e spesso ingannati;

> [n]onostante questi siano persone calme e non aggressive, che offrono discretamente i propri prodotti a basso costo, la Trieste razzista e sciovinista non li ha mai voluti come non ha voluto mai nessuno che non sia *Triestin patocco*.[12] (Verč 2009, 206)

I protagonisti sloveni della generazione 1946-65 sfruttano la propria appartenenza alla minoranza nazionale per immedesimarsi più facilmente negli Altri, per indagare le loro diversità e rifiutare i pregiudizi nazionali. Anche se i rapporti con gli italiani e gli altri sloveni migliorano, i personaggi letterari, appartenenti alla minoranza slovena, a priori provano simpatia verso gli appartenenti ad altre minoranze nazionali, come ad esempio i tedeschi in Italia o i baschi in Spagna:

> Ma abbiamo legato molto anche con i baschi, probabilmente per una qualche forma di solidarietà etnica, che si crea spontaneamente fra persone appartenenti a piccoli popoli da lungo oppressi.
>
> Subito dopo esserci conosciuti, infatti, abbiamo compreso, immediatamente, di essere sulla stessa lunghezza d’onda. Tutti sono dell’idea una volta arrivati sull’Everest, di far sventolare sulla cima non la bandiera spagnola, bensì quella basca! Com’è piacevole conversare con qualcuno che capisce al volo il significato della parola bilinguismo, in che cosa consiste il nodo centrale del problema delle scuole con lingua d’insegnamento diversa da quella nazionale, l’importanza della collocazione dei cartelli bilingui e dell’impiego dei traduttori negli uffici pubblici. (Jelinčič 1997, 103)

12 Triestino di ‘puro sangue’.

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3.3 L’insostenibile leggerezza dell’indifferenza (generazione 1966-90)

I romanzieri sloveni in Italia nati dopo il 1965[13] sono finora i meno conosciuti e affermati ma la loro scrittura sposta per la prima volta in modo radicale il romanzo sloveno in Italia lontano dai problemi nazionali e sociopolitici, che lo permeavano già ai suoi esordi, alla fine dell’Ottocento. I personaggi degli autori più giovani vivono in un mondo nichilistico e di valori sociali del tutto relativi, il che li distoglie dalla ricerca di risposte a qualsiasi tipo di questioni collettive. L’unico oggetto del loro interesse sono loro stessi, il loro mondo interiore, psichico e/o la natura, come nel caso di Vinko Bandelj e del suo *Grad in čas* (Il castello e il tempo) in cui il protagonista vero e proprio è un castello denominato Volčjak e la sua storia

> [d]a sedimento di sabbia a roccia. Da roccia a collina. Da collina a castello e di nuovo dall’inizio. Da castello a sedimento di sabbia. (2016, 154)

Proprio in uno di questi romanzi succede che per la prima volta negli ultimi ventisei anni il protagonista di un romanzo sloveno scritto in Italia non sia di nazionalità slovena ma italiana. Nel romanzo di Erik Sancin *Nekje sredi vročine* (Da qualche parte in mezzo al caldo) il personaggio principale è Luca, un giovane skinhead italiano di Torino, che però non ha alcun contatto con gli sloveni. In compenso girando l’Europa incontra tedeschi, cechi, inglesi, albanesi, giapponesi e irlandesi, con i quali il più delle volte si diverte, altre invece litiga fino a venire alle mani. In rare occasioni Luca tenta con loro dei discorsi seri o profondi. S’innamora di una ragazza inglese, Aily, ma il loro amore dura solo un’estate e finisce con il ritorno di Luca a Torino. Matjaž Klemše, invece, nel romanzo autobiografico *V zakrpanih gojzarjih* (Negli scarponi rattoppati) azzera ogni senso d’inferiorità o superiorità verso gli italiani, quando il suo protagonista, malato di cancro, in ospedale confida le proprie sensazioni e sentimenti ad altri pazienti italiani e ha con loro rapporti d’amicizia. Allo stesso modo durante il proprio percorso a piedi attraverso la Slovenia entra con facilità in contatto con gli sloveni in patria e i turisti dai vari Stati europei, i cechi, gli austriaci, i francesi, gli italiani e gli inglesi. A prescindere dalla nazionalità tutti sono ben disposti l’uno verso l’altro e pronti ad aiutarsi reciprocamente, ma i rapporti tra di loro rimangono occasionali e non si evolvono mai in un’amicizia duratura e sincera. Dialogano su temi generali senza mai spingersi oltre.

13 Nell’ambito della generazione 1966-90 rientrano quattro romanzi, scritti tra il 1991 e il 2016. Fino ad oggi nessuno di questi romanzi è stato tradotto.

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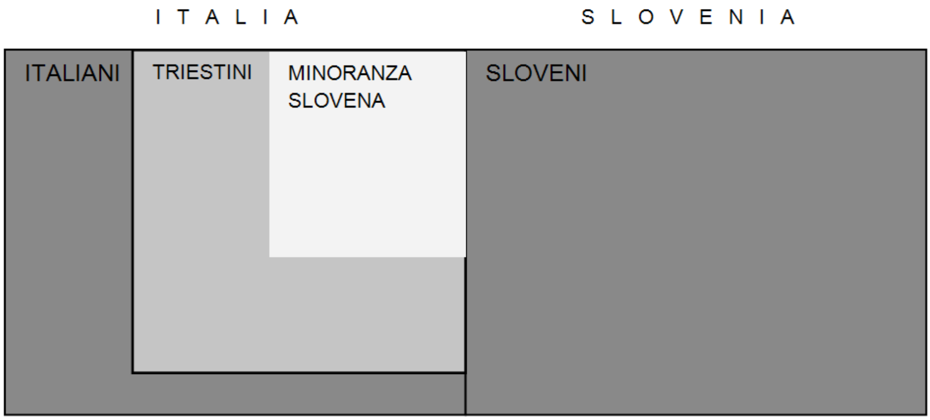


Grafico 3. L'annullamento delle barriere tra gli sloveni in Italia e gli Altri

> «*Hej, káko sij?*»[14]
> Fece un sorriso a trentadue denti. Un paio di parole slovene le aveva imparate. Era un paio d'anni più grande di me.
> «Si vede che frequenti la montagna,» continuò nella lingua materna. Parlava l'inglese come se l'avesse imparato dai libri di testo. Non avevo alcun problema a capirlo.
> «Esatto,» risposi.«Dove vai?» «Da Maribor di qua, fino ad Ankaran… conosci?» […] «Le grotte, le montagne… Ti piace la Slovenia?» «Mi sono innamorato di questo paese. Ci torno già da dieci anni.» «Voi non avete grotte?» volli sapere. «Certo. Ma sono un po' diverse. L'anno scorso i ragazzi sono stati in visita da noi. Possono raccontarti com'era…» Guardò gli altri da sotto la fronte e scoppiò in una risata fragorosa. (Klemše 2009, 146)

Il rapporto quindi con gli Altri di varie identità nazionali è perlopiù diretto e per niente complicato, anche quando si tratta dei rapporti tra gli appartenenti alla minoranza slovena in Italia e gli italiani di Trieste, oppure gli sloveni di Slovenia (graf. 3), ma in compenso anche superficiale e segnato da un'indifferenza di fondo, percepita dagli scrittori della generazione 1966-90 in modo più forte che da qualsiasi altra prima. I loro protagonisti, infatti, spesso si trovano ad affrontare la solitudine e un profondo disagio esistenziale ai quali non trovano alcuna soluzione. Il mondo globalizzato, apparentemente senza

14 In sloveno la formulazione esatta è: '*Hej, kako si?*' ('Ei, come va?').

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barriere e in continua evoluzione, non li fa sentire liberi, ma disorientati. Contrariamente a quelli che si definiscono cittadini del mondo, i personaggi della generazione giovane degli autori sloveni in Italia non si sentono a casa in nessun luogo, nemmeno lì da dove in effetti provengono.

4 Conclusioni

Nella raffigurazione dell'Altro il punto di vista nei romanzi sloveni creati in Italia è quello della minoranza nazionale slovena. Si tratta di una scelta dettata dalla posizione specifica, tipica per le minoranze. Esse vivono in una situazione di doppia appartenenza ed esclusione nei confronti dello Stato in cui abitano (appartenenza fisica ma esclusione culturale) e della patria dalla quale sono separate (appartenenza culturale ma esclusione fisica). Ciò favorisce la ricerca della propria identità nella cerchia della comunità più stretta, vedendo chiunque al di fuori di essa come Altro-estraneo, percepito attraverso un miscuglio di superiorità e inferiorità come un soggetto che potrebbe intaccare l'armonia interna conquistata a fatica e quindi da cui è meglio tenere le distanze. Come constatato già da Pageaux (2012, 11), anche in questo caso si conferma che «l'immagine dell'Altro contiene anche l'immagine dell'Io che osserva, parla e scrive».

Tale percezione è ancora presente nella generazione di scrittori che hanno vissuto in prima persona il pericolo che la loro identità nazionale fosse cancellata dalla repressione e dalla violenza fascista. A causa dei traumi passati, della paura di perdere la propria lingua e la propria cultura, nei loro romanzi contemporanei l'Altro è visto generalmente come un estraneo da temere (graf. 4).

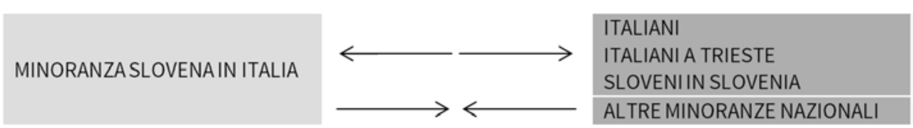


Grafico 4. Rapporti tra i personaggi letterari di nazionalità slovena e gli Altri (generazione 1910-45)

Con la generazione nata nel primo periodo successivo alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale, si rispecchia anche nel romanzo ciò che avviene nella società dalla seconda metà del Novecento in poi. Gli scontri tra sloveni e italiani del territorio triestino non sono del tutto risolti ma sempre più numerose sono le iniziative volte al dialogo tra le due comunità. L'aprirsi, seppur lento, dell'uno verso l'Altro, viene romanzato (graf. 3).

La generazione degli scrittori più giovani invece sembra percepire l'Altro come un soggetto qualunque, indipendentemente dalla sua identità

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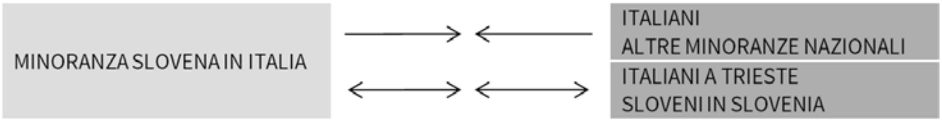


Grafico 5. Rapporti tra i personaggi letterari di nazionalità slovena e gli Altri (generazione 1946-65)

nazionale. I rapporti internazionali sembrano diventare sempre più semplici (graf. 5). La domanda che però rimane aperta è se tutto ciò è il reale riflesso della loro percezione di una società, in cui i conflitti della minoranza slovena in Italia con le altre comunità sono meno importanti, risolti, poco interessanti, oppure se è un tentativo di allontanarsi dal patrimonio delle precedenti generazioni e trovare la propria espressione letteraria.

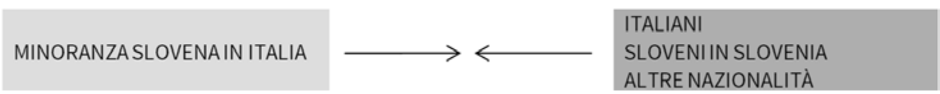


Grafico 6. Rapporti tra i personaggi letterari di nazionalità slovena e gli Altri (generazione 1966-90)

Se prendiamo in prestito la terminologia di Pageaux (2012, 19-20) notiamo una rappresentazione dell’Altro segnata dalla cosiddetta ‘fobia’ della prima generazione, quando la realtà altrui è concepita come inferiore in rapporto alla cultura dell’osservatore, il passaggio e l’avvicinamento alla ‘filia’ della seconda generazione, la quale percepisce la realtà straniera positivamente e lo stesso vale anche per la cultura originaria, fino ad arrivare al ‘cosmopolitismo/internazionalismo’ della terza generazione, la quale non è interessata a giudicare (né positivamente né negativamente), l’Altro.

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